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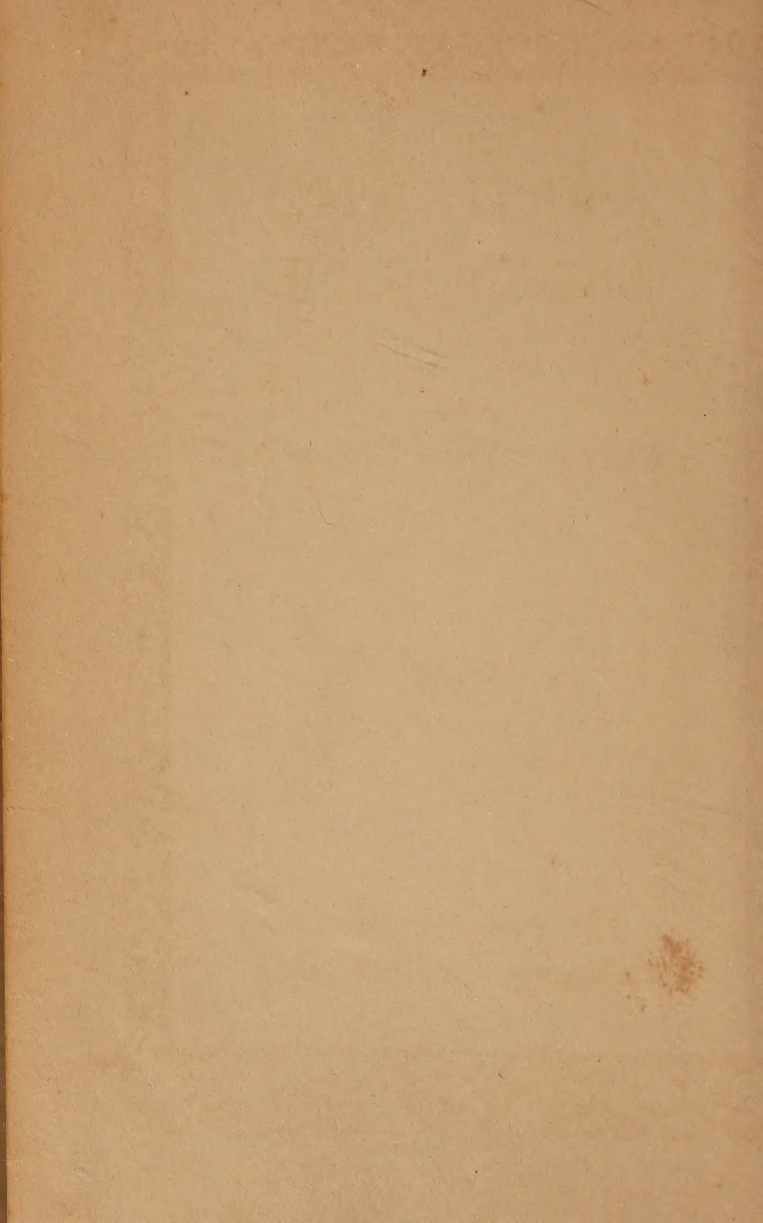




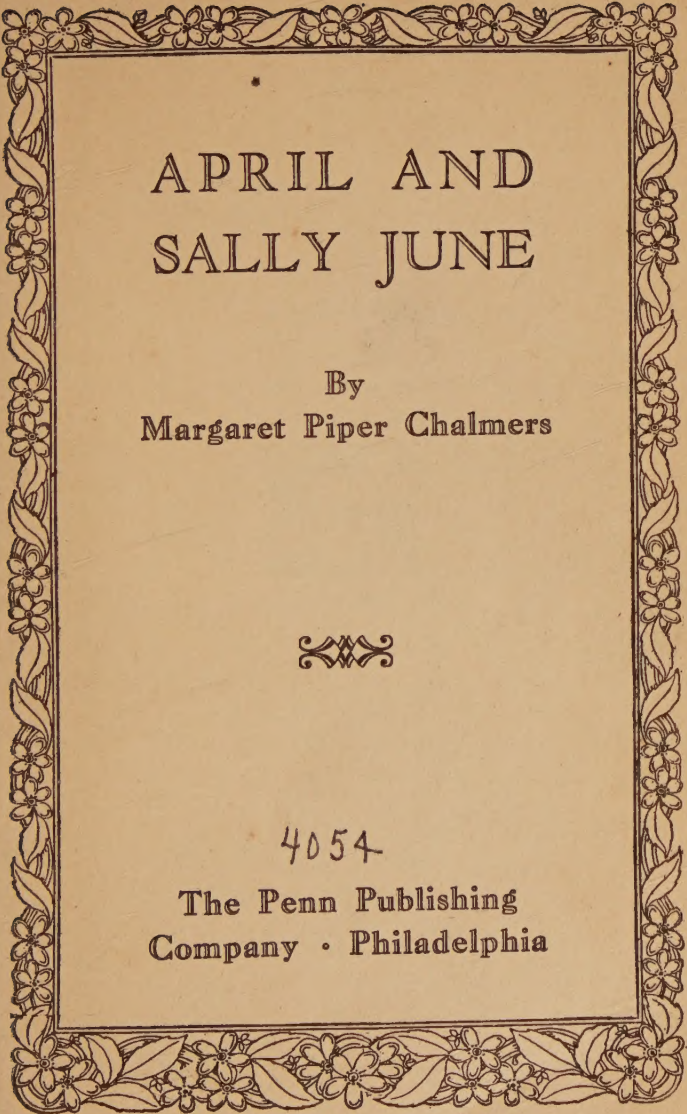


APRIL AND  
SALLY JUNE







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# APRIL AND SALLY JUNE

By  
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April and Sally June

MADE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



*To Another April Girl*

G. D. R.





# *April and Sally June*

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## *Chapter I*

SALLY JUNE unburied one rosy ear from among the pillows and frowned at the horrid din which old black Tim was making out there in the corridor, then, taking a sleepy peep at the clock on the mantel, snuggled down again with a blissful sigh of content, drawing the bed clothes over her head to shut out the vile alarum.

For what was a Rising Bell to Sally June? It was Sunday. No Classes. No Church Duty. Praise be, she had taken her trick at that, last week! Had she not marshalled seven pairs of giggling, ogling, obstreperous Daughters of Our Best Old Southern Families, down Greene Street, safely past the too diverting College Campus and into the reserved pew at

## *April and Sally June*

the red brick Presbyterian Church? Had she not there sat, striving dutifully to listen to what she was convinced was one of the dullest and dreariest sermons ever preached, and striven even harder, *not* to listen to what were surely the worst and most utterly dismal discords ever uttered under the name of sacred song? Well, indeed, had she earned this hour of blessed respite.

Even breakfast was of less importance than usual. For had she not yesterday providently supplied herself with a bag full of fine red apples and a large cake of eminently nourishing sweet chocolate? And one could always fall back on the crackers in the box on the closet shelf provided the mice hadn't been there first. Oh, yes, Sally June could afford to sleep this morning.

But saving perhaps a woman, there is scarcely anything in the world more perverse than sleep. And sleep, though offered every inducement and gently cajoled and fervently entreated, having once been affrighted by black Tim's clanging brass, positively refused

## *April and Sally June*

to return to Sally June's pillow. Sally June was exasperatingly, indubitably, permanently wide awake.

Raising herself on one elbow, she looked window-ward.

Even the April world was in the conspiracy. The little wind that fluttered the white muslin curtains wafted in all manner of spicy, sweet, delectable odors — lilacs, clove pinks, syringa, jasmine. Heaven knew what else beside. Close at hand, in the magnolia tree, a mocking bird carolled madly and, from somewhere further off, came the exquisite silver fluting of a thrush. Morning glories, pink and purple and white, Sally June knew would be nodding against the wall. Cobwebs would lie aglisten with dew on the emerald grass. Robins would be hopping cheerfully about in pursuit of the not-quite-so-early worm. The sky would be clear turquoise, except perhaps for a fleecy white cloud here and there. The rose garden would be drenched with honey colored sunshine.

## *April and Sally June*

Oh, well! Sally June sighed — surrendered — sprang out of bed. Thrusting her small feet into pink satin mules and giving a toss to her golden brown mane, she ran to the window and looked out.

Oh, Heavenly! After all, who would want to waste a divine morning like this in sordid unconsciousness? Not Sally June Fenton.

Darting in behind the pseudo-Japanese screen, she performed her ablutions at the discolored “golden oak” wash stand, with a great splashing and now and then a fragment of song. This rite over she dressed hastily. Now that she was up she didn’t propose to be so late for breakfast that those inexorable dining room doors would be shut against her. Apples and sweet chocolate and mice nibbled biscuit no longer appealed to her. She wanted bacon, crisp and hot, an egg, delicately brown, turned as only old Aunt Sis could do them, coffee, beaten biscuit. Yes, even the despised hominy grits would not be neglected. After all, it made an excellent foundation.



## *April and Sally June*

“ We’ll skip prayers though,” Sally June confided to the pink cheeked, hazel eyed young person who confronted her in the mirror as she brushed out her abundant locks upon which a good fairy godmother had bestowed — Oh, lucky Sally June! — a permanent wave and golden glint all its own. “ We must draw the line somewhere. We’ll go for a long walk all by ourselves. Dogwood and redbud are out. Maybe there’ll be ladies’ slippers. Violets anyway, in the deep woods. And we’ll forget — absolutely forget that on six days a week we’re Instructress in English Literature and Rhetoric, dedicated to the noble and uplifting task of scattering sweetness and light among young Christian gentlewomen.”

Sally June’s red lips twisted a bit wryly over that last phrase. Christian, she accepted. She was a minister’s daughter. But “ gentlewomen ” — alas, Sally June had learned to detest the too often heard word with all its irksome limitations and connotations. Decidedly, we must admit that Sally June, privately but none the less vigorously, balked at

## *April and Sally June*

“gentlewomen” as interpreted by Miss Sophia Bainbridge, principal and guider of destinies of the Hannah Barr Female Institute of Cameronville, Georgia.

Sally June had a conviction that Miss Bainbridge would have kindly but firmly set Sally June’s own lovely mother, Dolores, outside the pale of the term. How indeed, could any one be, at one and the same time, a gentlewoman and also a “play actress” and Spanish born at that? So Miss Bainbridge might have asked rhetorically, expecting no answer. For that matter, Miss Bainbridge needed no answers to anything. She had the entire universe neatly card catalogued and classified and put into alphabetical order for ready reference.

But Sally June Fenton refused in her heart, either to be card-catalogued herself or to admit the card catalogue theory of things. She didn’t believe that everything was dull and cut and dried and finished and finite as Miss Bainbridge ordered it. She knew instinctively that there was more to life than

## *April and Sally June*

Miss Bainbridge recognized or included within the narrow bounds of gentlewomanry. And if her mother were no gentlewoman, according to Miss Bainbridge's categories, then Sally June passionately preferred to be outside the pale too, with Dolores. It was not only loyalty, though Sally June adored the memory of her mother. Sally June thought she could breathe better outside. Sally June loved to take great, deep breaths.

“ We'll just be Sally June Fenton and nobody else for a few hours,” she promised her own reflection in the glass. “ We'll be free — free as April! ”

Free as April! Free to be herself! Nobody knew just how much Sally June hated being an instructress in anything, even in Literature which she dearly loved. Nobody knew how she hated having to go about, day after day, supposedly a model of all the dull, mature virtues and wisdoms, for the benefit of a bunch of silly girls, many of them but little younger than herself, and most of them, as Sally June's mirror could not help telling her, not

## *April and Sally June*

a tenth as pretty. Nobody knew how she longed to go free — like the wind — to dance and play and laugh — to travel to far countries, see beautiful things, hear beautiful music — to live — yes, to love. At twenty-three, though she would scarcely have admitted it to herself, Sally June wanted, more than anything in the world — Romance.

Let us hasten to add that, to Sally June, Romance by no means meant merely marriage. If that had been all that was required, it would have been easy enough to have put salt on the bird's tail. Back in her home town among the hills, there was more than one irreproachable Christian, Georgian born gentleman, who was ready enough to induct pretty Sally June into matrimony, if that were all that was required. For that matter, there was Professor Arthur Parkes, right here in Cameronville, who had been proposing to her on an average of once a month, ever since she first met him at the house of her friend, Ursula Payne, more than a year ago.

Arthur was not as impossible as the solid,



## *April and Sally June*

somewhat over-settled-down and middle-aged gentlemen back home. He was still moderately young and rather nice looking, though his hair was getting undeniably thin on the top of his head. In spite of his being so erudite in the matter of Latin and Greek prosody, Arthur wasn't half bad at a one step either and played tennis excellently. Moreover, he had a sense of humor which some of the Georgian gentlemen had not.

But, unfortunately, Arthur couldn't, by any reach of the imagination, be construed into the embodiment of Romance. Still less had Romance to do with the callow college youths who, between dances at a hop, or even on the bleachers, at a football game, proclaimed their undying passion. Still farther away from the divine spark were the unwanted attentions of a certain gentleman of her acquaintance, who should decidedly have known better, attentions which Sally June had sternly nipped in the bud at the very start. An affair with a married man was the last thing on earth to spell Romance, in Sally June's opinion.

## *April and Sally June*

By this time she had rather definitely decided that Romance wasn't a growth indigenous to Cameronville. It had, she thought, to come riding from over the hills and far away. There was nothing she could do to hasten its arrival. She could only wait and see what happened. Maybe nothing ever would happen. Dearie me! But Sally June had to be very, very low, indeed, in her mind, to believe that and it was very, very rare, indeed, for Sally June to be low in her mind. Mostly she believed with all her might that even the high hedges that hemmed in a Female Institute could not keep Romance away from her when the time was right.

Sally June, completely clad in a most becoming pink gingham morning frock, was engaged in a minute scrutiny of a very charming, if slightly retroussé nose to see if, as she suspected, yesterday's tennis in sun and wind had produced a new crop of golden freckles, when somebody knocked.

The door opened in answer to Sally June's hospitable "Come in." And another girl

## *April and Sally June*

stood on the threshold, a girl dressed in blue, of a forget-me-not shade that precisely matched her eyes, a person amazingly blonde, petite and exquisite. She was, as it chanced, a full year older than Sally June Fenton, but she looked infinitely less able to fend for herself in a rough and tumble world. Her wistful, dainty fragility fairly called aloud to somebody to come quick and shield her from the rude winds of life, lest she be blown away like a rose petal, before one knew it.

“Sally June! Goodness! I had no idea you would be up. It’s a good thing you are. Miss Bainbridge says will you please take Miss Curry’s church duty? She’s got a frightful headache.”

Sally June slammed down her hand mirror, wrath and rebellion in her eyes.

“Sick headache!” she snapped. “Of course she has. The woman’s a pig, a disgusting pig. She had two helpings of plum duff last night. And heaven knows how many waffles with her chicken. I don’t see why I have to suffer because she hasn’t a single

## *April and Sally June*

grain of sense. Doesn't even know the limitations of her own tummy. Run back, Hallie, my child. Tell Miss Bainbridge that you couldn't find me—I'm out of town for the day—have an excruciating tooth ache—mumps—small pox—halitosis—Saint Vitus' Dance—anything. I'm simply not going to take those squirming, snickering female limbs of Satan to church this morning. That's flat."

Hallie Gerrard, whose courage was of almost as pale a hue as her cheeks, stared in horrified astonishment and alarm at her friend. She looked ready to cry at this robust ebullition of temper and determination on the part of the young person in the pink gingham before her.

"But Sally June!" she wailed. "You'll have to go. There's nobody else. And I can't tell Miss Bainbridge any of those things. You know I can't. I'd be scared to death."

Sally June laughed.

"Bless you, child! Of course, you can't and, of course, I'm going. I just naturally



## *April and Sally June*

had to fizz bang a little first to avert spontaneous combustion. All the same, it is a shame. Amanda Curry ought to know better at her age than to gorge so."

Sally June walked over to the window and kissed her hand to the April world.

"Too bad, sweetheart!" she murmured. "Cruel fate parts us for the moment. Never mind. We'll keep tryst some other blue and gold morning. Don't forget."

Turning back she beheld the mystified Hallie all ears at the pronouncement of those delightful, intriguing words "sweetheart" and "tryst." Hallie was immeasurably sentimental.

"Who were you talking to?" she demanded puzzled and not too grammatical.

Sally June, who wasn't in the least sentimental, laughed again. One couldn't stay in a bad temper on a morning like this. At least Sally June couldn't.

"Life," she retorted gaily, leaving the other girl but little enlightened. "You on duty?" she inquired amicably, proceeding to

## *April and Sally June*

polish her nails since it seemed as if that breakfast bell never would ring.

“ Yes. Christian Science with the Carey girls. Such nonsense! I don’t see why they can’t go to a regular church like other folks and save all this fuss of extra chaperoning.”

Sally June pursed her lips primly.

“ The Susan Barr Institute is very broad. It permits its students the utmost latitude of religious thought consistent with Christian conduct and principles,” she quoted in the mincing voice of Miss Lansing, the Assistant Principal.

Hallie Gerrard arranged her blue ruffles in front of the mirror.

“ I don’t think we are really broad, do you? ” she queried absently. “ I’m positive Miss Lansing, and Miss Bainbridge too, just shiver inside when they think of Christian Scientists and Unitarians, not to mention Jews.”

“ Of course they do. But the Careys have loads of money and a whole troop of scientific and healthful young sisters coming on, fore-

## *April and Sally June*

doomed, quite as if they were Presbyterians, to be educated somewhere. We can't afford to offend the family. Therefore we assume the virtue though we have it not, grit our teeth and close our eyes. But don't fool yourself, sweet Hallie. Listen to the mocking bird. Let you or me exhibit even the faintest tendencies to — um — ah — breadth, either in theology or behavior, and we'd find ourselves more or less painlessly extracted from these hallowed walls and set down in the cold outside. Faculty — poor worms — must conform. Or burrow somewhere else if they are lucky enough to get the chance."

"Sally June! Do you suppose they would actually fire us if they caught us doing anything not — not quite regular?"

Hallie's breath came a little short as she asked the question. A sudden flush stained her pale cheeks and her blue eyes looked like a scared rabbit's, phenomena which Sally June, absorbed in her nail polishing and considering the subject under discussion as purely academic, did not chance to observe.

## *April and Sally June*

“Sure they would,” she responded cheerfully. “They’d have to. Self preservation is the first law of institutions. Competition is something fierce. By the way, do you happen to know which church I am stuck with?” she changed the subject to inquire with perhaps less elegance of diction than might have been expected from the Chair of English, addressing the Department of Voice Culture and Dramatic Art of Hannah Barr Female Institute.

Again Hallie flushed warmly.

“Episcopalian.” She sighed and there was a bit of envy in her sigh.

“Oh, unjust Heavens! My infernal luck!” groaned Sally June. “So I’m to spend two mortal hours of this glorious morning upgazing at the Reverend Morrisson’s perfect profile and listening to the spell of his silver oratory. Worse and worse! Confound and double confound Amanda Curry and her wretched plum duff!”

“Sally June!” Hallie opened round, shocked, hurt eyes very wide. “I think you are dreadful to make fun of a minister of the



## *April and Sally June*

gospel. And his profile is wonderful. You can't deny it." There was an unusual beligerence in the speaker's soft Southern voice.

"I don't," chuckled Sally June. "Too wonderful for me. Minister of the gospel, or no, I cannot abide the Reverend Morrisson. He's a hypocrite," she summed up decisively.

"Sally June! He's not," denied Hallie Gerrard, quite as positively.

"Well, I tell you he is. Don't ask how I know. He is, that's all."

And Sally June's chin tilted in a way that betokened small shrift for hypocrites, in the pulpit or out of it.

"But I don't see —"

"You don't have to," tartly. "For goodness' sake, Hallie Gerrard, don't you go and get gone on the Reverend Morrisson. It's bad enough for half the girls in Hannah to go mooning round, raving about him and trying to change their original Church Preferences so they can worship the Cult of the Perfect Profile, without your following suit. You make me tired, all of you. Thank Heaven,

## *April and Sally June*

there's the bell, at last! I'm starved. Come on."

Pink and Blue Frocks descended the old stair case, side by side. Pink Frock having delivered her opinion, dismissed the Reverend Morrisson from her thoughts considering it quite time to recall him again two hours later when she had to. But Blue Frock, lagging a little behind, pressed nervous fingers against her bosom where a folded paper nestled, a wee note which no eyes but hers had seen since it came to her.

"My little Wonder Girl! When am I to see you again alone? It is hard to have to wait." These words sang in Hallie's ears and echoed in her heart. A hypocrite, indeed! That was all Sally June knew about it. It wasn't Sally June for all she was so pretty and clever and popular, who was his "little Wonder Girl." It was she, Hallie Sylvia Gerard, who, all unworthy though she was, was set apart for the miracle of this great man's love. If only she dared tell Sally June. Sometimes it seemed as if she would burst if she

## *April and Sally June*

didn't. But no, she must keep the secret. She had promised and she would keep her word. Not even Sally June, her best friend, must know.

A bit later that same morning, the "young ladies" sat in the wide breezy hall of Hannah Barr, waiting to be marched off to church, two by two, like animals going into the ark, by their respective chaperones of the day, according to the sacred and much studied "List."

The Presbyterians, having the farthest to go, had already started, followed hard upon by the Methodists. The "U. P.'s" were even now being lined up, by no less a person than Miss Bainbridge herself, who was, according to her habit, subjecting each maiden to a rigid inspection, in matters pertaining to immaculateness of gloves and person, length of sleeve and skirt and particularly for damning evidence of the use of contraband lip stick or rouge box. Miss Bainbridge was as thorough as she was firm.

The Carey sisters sat apart on the haircloth sofa under the large and remarkably ugly

## *April and Sally June*

portrait of the original Hannah Barr. An aura of self consciousness encircled the two as was natural enough considering the distinction they enjoyed in having a religion all to themselves, requiring a private, personal chaperone. They did not speak. They simply sat and looked superior while waiting.

In the rear of the hall, next to the open door which led out to the porch and beyond to the rose garden, sun bathed and fragrant, the six Episcopalians lingered chattering. Had Miss Bainbridge not insisted so strictly upon rigorous adherence to the originally expressed "Church Preference," reinforced by written parental corroboration, it is probable that this group would have numbered nearer sixty than six, so fervently was what Sally June Fenton irreverently dubbed the "Cult of the Perfect Profile" being worshipped this spring among the "young ladies." Once a Presbyterian, United or otherwise, once a Methodist, or Baptist, so you inevitably remained, according to Miss Bainbridge, even though the handsomest young rector in the whole state

## *April and Sally June*

occupied the Episcopalian pulpit. The six fortunate ones born into the sacred purple of High-Churchdom, were naturally devoutly envied and preened themselves not a little vain-gloriously in their elect state, which included the privilege of "sitting under" the Reverend William Morrisson, whose profile was, as Hallie Gerrard had said, undeniably wonderful, and whose voice was as the girls declared "just too lovely for anything." No doubt his sermons were good too. But what was a sermon to "young ladies"?

"Who's taking us?" Minna Blake was asking, shifting her position a little so as to get a better reflection of her buxom young person in the glass of a picture which hung opposite her.

"Fatty Curry," promptly supplied little Susan Bell, of the snub nose, fresh from a minute survey of the Church List.

"I'll bet she isn't," contradicted Evelyn Harper who had just joined the group. "Fatty's sick. I heard her going on something dreadful in the wash room sink while I



## *April and Sally June*

was taking my bath. My word! Sick's no name for it." The speaker shrugged expressively to indicate the indescribable extent of poor Miss Curry's unfortunate indisposition. "She's probably swathed in blankets by now and draped with hot water bottles. Somebody else will have to take us. Hope it's Miss Hallie. She's not down yet. I saw her just now upstairs wearing the sweetest blue frock — all ruffles, looking just like an angel. Honestly, she's the darlinest thing. Don't you all just naturally adore her? I do."

"She's not half as pretty as Miss Sally June," objected Minna, ready to do battle for her own favorite. "She can't play tennis or do any of the things Miss Sally June does. Awfully wishy washy I think. Always makes me think of that silly no 'count creature we had in English the other day. What was her name? The one that just lay down and died because Lancelot didn't fall for her."

"Elaine, the lily maid of Astalot," murmured Evelyn dreamily. "Miss Hallie does

## *April and Sally June*

look like her, just like a lily. And I think it's wonderful to die for love, so there! "

"Wonderfully silly, I call it," sniffed Minna. "Bet you wouldn't catch Miss Sally June doing it. She'd have just snapped her fingers at Lancelot and turned round and found somebody a whole lot nicer, just pining to marry her. Probably a Prince at that. And Lancelot was nothing but a Sir and in love with the Queen which he shouldn't have been when there was Arthur."

"Well, Miss Hallie's in love with the Reverend Morrisson."

It was the snub-nosed and ordinarily negligible Susan who exploded this bomb under the noses of the Episcopalians.

"What!" "How do you know?" "Goodness me, how perfectly thrilling!"

The rest of the group of the elect pressed around small Susan. This was rare news indeed!

"Oh, I know, all right," responded Susan, swelling with a sense of unusual importance, immensely gratified to discover that she had

## *April and Sally June*

created a real sensation. "Do you remember that church garden party last week? Well, I lost my handkerchief somewhere and went back to see if I could find it. And I saw the Reverend Morrisson and Miss Hallie, way off by themselves beyond the lilac bushes, standing ever so close together. And Miss Hallie looked, well, you know how you look when you're in love," the speaker finished with what she felt was regrettable inadequacy of phrasing considering the magnitude of the subject.

"But, he's married," objected Esther Jones, another Episcopalian born, in rather shocked tone.

"Pooh! What of it?" Minna promptly dismissed this objection. "Nearly all the nicest ones are. It's like the sales. The real bargains get snapped up first. 'Cepting now and then when something really good gets tucked down out of sight and you find it later when you've about given up hope. Oh, there's Miss Hallie now. She must be going to take us. No, she's going with the Carey girls.

## *April and Sally June*

Hurray! We've got Miss Sally June. And she's wearing that sweet gray frock and the rose colored hat, the darling! Gosh! This is a lucky day!"

As Sally June walked demurely down the magnolia shaded walk in front of Hannah Barr, Minna and Evelyn, on either side of her, the other four following in pairs behind, "got" seemed precisely the right word. Even as a spider gets its victim tangled in its mesh, this hateful business of chaperoning young ladies tangled up her own eager feet, which longed to go roaming afar under blue sky, in April wind and sun. Beneath the "sweet gray frock" beat a rebellious heart and resentment, not against poor Miss Curry, who was, indeed, being punished enough for her sins of gluttony, but against the whole system of things which confined, not only roving feet but roving spirit. Was she — Sally June Fenton — doomed to go on forever like this, till she grew old and fat and dull, like poor old Amanda herself, interested in nothing beyond plum duff and waffles and

## *April and Sally June*

manœuvering to get the choicest bit of white meat?

With a little sigh, Sally June came back to the immediate realities, perceiving that Minna was making eyes at a group of young collegians who were lounging down the street, obviously out to see "the Girls" — one of the most popular Sunday sports. She touched Minna's arm in mild admonition but she did not feel really admonitory. She felt instead oddly sympathetic. Minna was rather vulgar in her ogling and giggling and curvetting. The college boys were very young and very green. But it was April. And there was no use denying it, April did something to you, made you happy and unhappy all at once, made you want to laugh one minute and cry the next, made you want everything you couldn't have, everything out of reach and beautifully impossible, set something tingling in you which was delicious but which hurt a little too. Sally June found herself being very glad she was young enough to feel April working inside her, glad she had decided to wear



## *April and Sally June*

the new gray frock and the rose colored hat instead of the old dark blue outfit which would have done well enough for the occasion, glad that she couldn't see beyond the turn of the road, up the hill. You could always imagine wonderful things coming from just around the corner.

And then, in all unexpectedness, something did come around that very corner. A great, black horse came flying out of the very blue sky, it seemed, straight toward Sally June, and on the back of the great, black horse, was a tall man, bare headed, clad in rough gray tweeds. The Episcopalians stared. So, I fear, did Miss Sally June Fenton. Horseback riders were decidedly infrequent in Cameronville, so rare, indeed, as to be considered a practically extinct species, though in the good old days, before the war, nearly every gentleman had ridden well and hard, as became gentlemen and descendants of Englishmen.

Moreover, one knew everyone in Cameronville and no Cameronvillian in the least resembled this rider, who sat his horse with a

## *April and Sally June*

kind of strength and grace that made him and the magnificent animal blend in one, like a splendid equestrian statue, only so much more splendid than any statue because it had pulsing life and movement.

The black horse came abreast with the loitering group of church goers. The rider checked him a bit and bestowed a careless though friendly glance upon the "young ladies," then his gaze, reaching Sally June in her gray frock and rose colored hat and with April in her eyes, focussed, registered a distinct access of interest.

As the stranger's deep set and very dark gray eyes met hers, Sally June felt her cheeks grow hot and her heart give a queer leap, as if, without warning, it had decided to change its position inside her. For an instant the two looked hard at each other. Then the moment passed. And the rider passed, too. The girls, frankly curious and excited by the sudden appearance of this mysterious and intriguing stranger in the prosaic streets of Cameronville, turned to gape after him. Sally June

## *April and Sally June*

did not turn but her heart still behaved oddly, seemed to be fluttering wildly about like a bird that has been put in a cage when it is used to having its freedom. Sally June could not remember that her heart had ever behaved like that before. Its amazing conduct interested her.

But this would never do.

“ Ridiculous,” she chided herself sternly. “ Come out of it. You are as bad as Minna. As if it were the first man that ever looked at you. Ninny! ”

“ Who do you suppose he can be ? ” “ What a perfectly darling horse ! ” “ And didn’t he ride wonderfully — like a knight or centaur or something ? ” “ And wasn’t he dreadfully handsome ? ” So the girls chattered, beside and behind Sally June, appealing to her every now and then, for confirmation of their enthusiasms, and loitering most shockingly, considering that they were already a little late for church.

Sally June, outwardly very cool and unmoved and chaperonish of demeanor hurried

## *April and Sally June*

them along. The last bell was ringing. Not so loud. A little faster. Don't stare. No, Miss Fenton had no idea who the man was. Never mind about him. They must remember they were going to church.

It was generally agreed that the Reverend Morrisson fairly outdid himself that morning in his impassioned plea for support of a foreign mission somewhere in China. Certainly he wrung tears from the gentle eyes of many of his female parishioners and, what was, perhaps, even better for the heathen and the heathen's missionaries wrung also a goodly showing of greenbacks in the plate, from the pockets of the fathers, brothers and husbands of the female parishioners.

But Sally June scarcely heard the silver oratory and, for once, the perfection of the orator's profile and his own consciousness thereof failed to exasperate her because she did not notice it. She had other things to think of. Funny how hard it was to put out of your mind a black horse and a gray eyed man in gray tweeds! Perhaps, though, you didn't

## *April and Sally June*

really try so very hard to banish them. Perhaps in your heart you felt that it was precisely such phenomena as these that ought to manifest themselves in April but so rarely did.

Sally June grew suddenly a bit irritated at the two women behind her who would whisper while they were finding their places in the prayer book.

“ I tell you, my dear, he is back. I saw him with my own eyes this morning on my way to church.”

Sally June recognized the voice of little Miss Browne, the librarian, who was whispering only too loudly.

“ Really! ” This from Miss Browne’s neighbor in the pew, in the unctuous tone some women assume when about to be regaled with a particularly juicy bit of gossip. “ Frightfully awkward for the Reverend Morrisson, isn’t it — his coming back? Not to mention Mrs. Morrisson. Wasn’t he engaged to her — Dolly Morrisson, I mean — before the affair with the actress woman? ”

“ Before, my dear? Not at all. He was



## *April and Sally June*

engaged to Dolly at the very time he was carrying on with the other woman. Disgraceful, wasn't it? No wonder she threw him over when it came out. Though they do say she was just crazy over William even then. Queer doings! The family tried to hush it all up but it got out. Stella Newman was at the same house party and she got it out of a servant. There was a terrible scene. The husband found out what had been going on and went sort of crazy for a minute. No wonder. He fired a revolver at — you know. I don't like to mention names. Just grazed his cheek. William must have heard the noise and rushed out for he was there, too, on the spot, the servant said. Wasn't it frightful and poor William just going to be ordained? ”

“ Shocking! I don't see how he — the other one — dares to come back here and show his face among decent people.”

“ Oh, he has nerve enough for anything. I suppose he thinks we have forgotten. But Cameronville doesn't forget or forgive things like that. He'll never be received here again.

## *April and Sally June*

Never. Though his father, the Colonel, was greatly respected."

"Thank Heaven we keep up our standards," murmured the other piously. "Somebody has to in these loose, immoral days. Why, don't they even say that the child —"

Sally June heard no more. She was thankful when the reading of the collect shut out the whispering tongues. She did not know who the mysterious "he" was that had once been engaged to Mrs. Morrisson and had apparently tried to run away with another lady. She had all her father's distaste for gossip. Had also his tendency to take the part of the under dog. Whoever "he" was, he was probably not so black as they painted him. Their way of "keeping up standards" was to stick to all the narrow minded prejudices and uncharitableness they could find, she decided, the tone in which the words "actress woman" had been uttered still rankling.

Oh, well, she wasn't going to let things like that spoil her April morning. The sunshine fell through the stained glass windows leaving

lovely lights on the walls. Made one think of Shelley. "Life, like a dome of many colored glass" — Life was like that, iridescent, ever changing, amazingly beautiful. April. Why the word itself was a singing thing — a lyric. It was good to be alive in April, alive and young. Would she ever see him again. Perhaps — Perhaps Not. Perhaps — Sally June's thoughts rested on Perhaps. It never went on to Perhaps Not. What was the use of being young and alive in April otherwise?



## *Chapter II*

SALLY JUNE! You darling! Just awfully good of you to come. You'd have had a much better dinner at Hannah Barr. Chicken is so high just now, we have to pretend we prefer mutton stew. Of course, with lots of vegetables. So vitaminy, you know! Mercy, how pretty you look, child! Is that the new hat? My, but you did splurge on your last month's pay! And the dress! It is a dream — for you. I'd have to be melted and poured in and then there'd be lots left over. It's Stylish Stouts for me, these days. Stouts anyway. I hae me doubts about the Stylish."

And Ursula Payne's laugh rang out clear and sweet at her own expense, as she took the corner of a huge blue kitchen apron and wiped off a disfiguring smudge from her plump cheek, surveying herself in the mirror over Sally June's slim, gray clad figure, while the

## *April and Sally June*

latter dusted a bit of powder on her nose and flicked a gold brown curl back over one small ear.

In the mirror, Sally June likewise took in Ursula in her gaze. Ursula had been a Senior in college when Sally June had been a Freshman but there might easily have been eight or even ten years between them now, instead of four. Ursula was plump, faded, a bit dowdy, more than a little untidy. Sally June had a vision of the Ursula for whom she had stood bridesmaid six years ago, an Ursula slender as a young birch tree, fresh and pretty as a rose. Heavy count against matrimony! Particularly matrimony where an underpaid, overworked college professor was the party of the second part. If Arthur had been proposing that minute he would have received scant shrift. Sally June could have wept for Ursula's lost youth and figure and beauty though she knew Ursula herself was utterly unconcerned about these losses. Perhaps it was her not caring that made Sally June consider her case so desperate.



## *April and Sally June*

“ Bobby and Dick are out in the back yard making mud pies. I’ve got to run and reclaim them before Robert gets home from church. He simply hates to see them in such a mess. I don’t care so much myself so long as they’re happy and healthy. But he thinks they ought to be spick and span, on Sunday anyway, as no doubt they should. But first, let’s just take a peep at the baby. She’s so sweet. Sally June, sometimes I’m just scared to love anything the way I love that child. Come on, she’s in the nursery.”

Sally June followed, cogitating a bit resentfully on Robert who wished his children always spick and span and yet couldn’t afford the servants to help his wife keep them in that desirable condition. One shiftless darkie in the kitchen and the washing — some of it — sent out! The rest Ursula did. Oh, men! Matrimony went down another notch or two.

In the next room they found Eleanor Ruth, the nine months old young lady, lying in her crib, clad in next to nothing, kicking small rosy heels in the air and gurgling ecstatically

## *April and Sally June*

over some delectable private joke of her own. Ursula bent over the crib and something caught at Sally June's throat as she saw the expression on the other woman's face, a look so tender, so adoring, so selfless that it transfigured her, made her, Sally June thought, as beautiful as a Murillo madonna.

Certainly it must be wonderful to be the mother of an exquisite little creature like this, all soft curves and dimples, with flesh, cool and sweet and pink like rose petals. Matrimony slid up a little in the scale. Ursula stretched out her arms, uttering a gentle, inarticulate cooing sound. And the baby laughed and snuggled its little head against the mother's ample bosom. Watching, Sally June found herself winking back tears, as she sometimes had to wink them back when she was listening to violin music, though neither then nor now, did she know why the tears came.

"Isn't she sweet?" demanded Ursula.

And Sally June agreed with all her heart that she was, about the sweetest thing she had ever seen.

## *April and Sally June*

And then came the sound of young shrieks and clattering little feet. Robert and Richard, aged respectively five and four, were arriving, their chubby faces smeared from ear to ear, and leaving behind them, as they came, a trail of muddy tracks on the polished stairs.

“ Mercy! ” groaned their mother surveying them. “ What wrecks! Even worse than I imagined. Never mind. Luckily you’ll wash. Into the bath room, quick, before Father sees you. Plenty of hot water, Bobby, and soap. And mind you, don’t you touch a towel till I come. And don’t let Dicky get hold of the spray. He shoots it all over the ceiling,” she added in explanation to her guest. “ They’re terrible, Sally June. You can’t think how many perfectly awful things they think of to do during the course of a day.” The mother’s tone contained a mingling of pride and despair.

Sally June laughed.

“ But you dote on their very terribleness, don’t you, Ursula? ” she teased.

“ Of course I do. I’d hate to have them

## *April and Sally June*

dead ones. Besides, if they are sufficiently terrible they'll never, never be content to grow up into college professors."

"Something to be thankful for," Sally June smiled back.

"Heavens, hear them now! You'd think they were Comanche Indians. I must fly. Back you go into the crib, mother's angel. I've got to scour your brothers. Goodness! There's Robert now. And Professor Parkes with him! And mutton stew for dinner and nothing but prunes for dessert! And me not even dressed! Play with your spools, lamb. Mother'll be back in a jiffy. Sally June, do go down and talk to Robert and Professor Parkes. I'll come just as soon as I can get there. Here's hoping Martha Washington hasn't burned the stew. Seems as if I smelt it. Then there'd be only prunes. Yes, Dick, Mother's coming. Don't squeal so."

Left alone, Sally June did not immediately go down stairs. She was in no hurry to converse with Professor Payne who, though a Ph.D. and incredibly versed in the lore of an-

## *April and Sally June*

cient histories, was not, Sally June thought, a very enlivening person to talk to. As for Arthur, she was distinctly annoyed at him for being on the spot. He should have known better than to come to dinner when Ursula didn't expect him. As if she didn't have enough to do without feeding every stray campus bachelor. He ought not to have accepted Professor Payne's invitation. Professor Payne had no business to invite him. Men had no consideration. They were stupid. Matrimony went down, down, oh very far down, indeed! And the genus College Professor became particularly offensive and to be avoided like a plague. Sally June rebelled — for Ursula — for all harassed, over-burdened women everywhere.

She strolled over to the baby's crib. Eleanor Ruth was crowing and gurgling over her string of spools as if they were the choicest treasures of the universe. Seeing Sally June she deserted the spools, however, and put up two tiny, plump, enticing hands to the new comer. Sally June succumbed. In an instant,



## *April and Sally June*

Eleanor Ruth was in her arms. Perhaps Sally June had wanted her there all the time but had not quite dared. What wonderful things babies were! What a thrill it gave you when their little soft hands patted your cheek! Sally June wondered if she would ever have a baby of her own and then blushed at her own thought.

Even as she wondered, Eleanor Ruth's busy fingers had discovered Sally June's coral necklace and were tugging at it determinedly, with all their small might. Sally June had to concentrate on what proved to be a difficult and delicate task, but finally succeeded in getting the beads away from the baby, the string still intact. She tossed them over to the table for safe keeping. Evidently coral beads were one of the frivolities you abjured if you would indulge in the luxury of hugging babies.

Ursula, her cheeks shining like red apples, and puffing a little from her recent strenuous exertions, popped her head in the door.

"Goodness! Haven't you gone down yet, Sally June? Oh, you've got the baby! Do

## *April and Sally June*

you mind taking her down and putting her in her pen? I'll just slip into something and be with you in a minute. Tell Robert to have Martha Washington dish up dinner. It must be done by this time if it's ever going to be. By, by, Mother's Loveums. Don't drop her, Sally June. She weighs a ton."

Sally June descended the stairs, the baby in her arms. At the foot she met Robert, the rather stodgy looking parent of the exquisite Eleanor Ruth, and Professor Arthur Parkes. Greetings being exchanged, Robert departed kitchenward to follow his spouse's instructions but Arthur stood stock still in his tracks staring at Sally June.

Sally June turned away a little sharply. She didn't want Arthur Parkes to stand there looking at her as if she were something sacred. She didn't want either to have him look too deeply into her, lest he should know how profoundly the touch of those clinging baby fingers stirred her.

She moved off briskly to the sitting room where she bent to deposit her burden in the

## *April and Sally June*

“pen,” a box-like enclosure, littered with rubbishy, battered dolls and queer, fuzzy, dirty bears and rabbits. With her characteristic cheerful adaptivity to a change of scene and amusement, Eleanor Ruth fell upon a dented antique of a powder can, which she proceeded to beat rhythmically with a spoon, creating a sort of primitive tom tom which obviously afforded her extreme gratification.

Rather to her annoyance, Sally June discovered that Arthur had followed her, still with that embarrassingly reverential look in his eyes. She could not help noticing that he was getting a little balder all the time, that he stooped slightly and that his thick glasses gave him a queer, owlish look. Arthur was awfully good but —

Funny! Utterly without intention on her part, Sally June's mind flashed another picture for her just at that *but*. She saw somebody very, very different from Professor Arthur Parkes, a tall, fine, athletic figure, clad in rough tweeds, sitting astride a tremendous black horse. Odd that a perfect stranger, a

## *April and Sally June*

man she might never see again, should somehow set himself up as a contrast and a criterion! Never until this minute had she been absolutely sure, beyond a question, that Arthur was not, couldn't ever be — *the* man. Now she was sure. Poor Arthur!

“Don't babies grow like weeds?” she said, snatching hastily for the first safe and handy topic for conversation.

The reverential look was getting on her nerves.

But Arthur refused to be diverted.

“Sally June, if you knew how wonderful you looked — with the baby in your arms! How sweet you were with it! Oh, Sally June, dear, couldn't you?”

It was all rather incoherent and jumbled. Sally June understood it perfectly. But she pretended she didn't, to gain time, after the immemorial manner of women.

“Couldn't I what?” she asked crisply. “Really, Arthur, for a Professor of Languages, even ancient ones, you do wander dreadfully when you talk.”

## *April and Sally June*

“I’m talking one of the most ancient languages in the world,” retorted Arthur. “You know what I mean. I am asking you again if you will marry me. Couldn’t you, Sally June?”

“No,” said Sally June, less crisply this time.

She was really a kind young person and hated to hurt anybody, even a college professor.

“I am sorry, Arthur, but I couldn’t. Please, don’t keep on asking me. I don’t love you and even if I did, I wouldn’t make you a bit happy. I’m not sweet tempered and unselfish and naturally sacrificial like Ursula. I’m — well, — I’m myself. I don’t want to be just somebody’s wife,” she summed up conclusively.

But Arthur was unusually argumentative.

“That isn’t true, Sally June. You don’t even know — yourself. And you do want to be somebody’s wife. Every girl does.”

“Does she?” Sally June smiled a little at

## *April and Sally June*

that. " Maybe you are right, Arthur. I suppose I do want to be somebody's wife but not yet — not for a long, long time. And — don't be shocked. You started it. — I don't want any babies — not for a long, long time either. They complicate things — break your coral beads unless you give up wearing coral beads and keep them put away in a box in the bureau drawer. Don't look so dazed. I'm not mad. I'm just being parabolic. Coral beads are a symbol. They are beauty — life. Don't you see? "

Sally June's eyes were very earnest. She liked Arthur. She really did want to make him see and understand.

" Are they? Maybe Mrs. Payne would say that it was babies that were beauty and life," returned Arthur with a flash of spirit and insight.

Sally June flushed.

" That's not fair, Arthur. Ursula does think it, of course. And she's right. They are beauty and life. But I want to wear my coral beads first for a long time before I —



## *April and Sally June*

before I try the other. Can't you understand, Arthur? I want to be free."

Arthur nodded gravely.

"Yes, Sally June, I think I can understand. I won't keep pestering you. I see you are not ready for love. But some day, you will be, and I am going to keep on hoping that when you are, I'll be on the spot," he finished humbly.

Sally June threw out her hands in protest. His humility touched her more than his insistence. Arthur was such a dear. If only she could give him what he wanted! But she couldn't. Somehow since morning she had grown very sure of that. And if he kept on hoping he would keep on being hurt. If only he wouldn't. Sally June did not want to hurt any living thing, least of all this man who had been so kind to her, who was so essentially good and fine and — hurttable.

"Don't hope," she pleaded. "I mean it, Arthur. It will never be any use."

"But Sally June — "

As it happened the lover's plea was destined

## *April and Sally June*

not to be uttered for at that moment, Ursula bustled in, to greet him warmly and tell them that dinner was on the table.

“So glad you came, Professor Parkes. It must be awfully lonely over at your boarding house. I always think Sunday should be a real home day for everybody. I tell Robert to bring any one, any time, any one who likes — mutton stew with vitamins,” Ursula laughed happily.

She was hopeless, Sally June decided. No use pitying her. She didn’t pity herself. She was glad, honestly glad to have Arthur, to have anybody, to share her happiness and home and food. If there wasn’t quite enough stew then everybody’s plate would be filled a tiny bit less, that was all, nobody would mind, least of all, Ursula.

Robert Payne, tired-eyed but kind, came up beside his wife, the two small boys, scrubbed and tubbed and clean bloused behind him, peeping shyly around his lean, rather shabbily clad figure. Ursula herself looked a bit shabby too, with her three year old dress put on hastily

## *April and Sally June*

and a lock of ill arranged hair drooping over one ear.

“ Ursula’s a wonder,” the Professor was saying, his hand on his wife’s shoulder. “ Just you wait, Arthur, till you get a girl like her. Only there aren’t many to be had. She’s in a class all by herself,” he added fondly.

Ursula turned to smile at him, radiantly happy at his praise. And for the first time Sally June found Robert an interesting person, a person who really appreciated his wife and knew her for the treasure she was. And they loved each other, each really believed the other wonderful. Maybe this was Romance after all, right here in Cameronville.

Sally June’s eyes strayed to Arthur speculatively. Was it possible for her to find Romance with him, even as Ursula and her lean, shabby, kind, forgetful, learned Robert had found it together? Sally June wished the answer could have been “ yes ” but, alas, it was still “ no.” Romance was here. Grant that. But not Sally June’s Romance. No.

So positive of this was Sally June that she

## *April and Sally June*

refused to go riding that afternoon in Arthur's neat, new "Flivver," insisted that she was going for a walk by herself instead, maybe going to call on her father's old friend, Miss Serena Pringle, who was not feeling so well this week and needed a visit from Sally June to cheer her up.

And truly Sally June had meant to call on Miss Serena, whom she loved dearly, but somehow, once swinging along the country road, her heart singing a gay little tune in chorus with the meadow larks, she couldn't make up her mind to do it after all. Miss Serena was sweet, but she was old and quiet and frail and Sally June was young and restless and strong as the April winds. She wanted to be alone this afternoon, to think her own thoughts, and forget everything that bothered her, things like having to take duty at school and having to hear the girls recite "The Skylark" as if it meant no more than "Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son," and not caring about Arthur the way he wanted her to care, and the queer ache that Ursula's baby's fingers had pressed into her heart. No,

## *April and Sally June*

Sally June desired no other comrade than April that afternoon.

On and on she went, heedless of the passing of time and the lengthening of shadows until suddenly looking up she perceived with dismay that the sun was already low above the western hills.

Oh, dear! Late to supper again. Too late for Vespers. What would Miss Bainbridge say? Tardily, Sally June recalled that Miss Bainbridge had a distinct objection to solitary rambles at dusk along country roads, particularly on Sundays when queer people might be abroad. Plainly she was in for a lecture unless she could perform the impossible and get home in half an hour. Faculty was expected to attend Vespers unless some plausible excuse for absence could be produced like a headache or a tea party with some of "Our Best People" who lived in the fine old houses, set back in fine old gardens and spent a large portion of their time and yours telling you you should have seen it all before the war, the war which meant to these dear old persons, not the

## *April and Sally June*

affair of 1917 and 1918 but a matter of the early sixties.

Sally June never had headaches and scorned to invent them as some of the others did. As for the tea parties she attended as few of these as she could. She didn't see any use in always burrowing in the past, never lifting your head to see the beauty of things as they were, this minute. Certainly Sally June had no excuse for not being home for Vespers.

Realizing this she blinked a meditative eye at the red sun which blinked back maliciously at her.

"Serves you jolly well right!" So the round, red disc seemed to say. "Ought to have gone to see Miss Serena. Horrid, selfish young person! Could have taken a street car home from there. Been back for Vespers. Can't possibly make it from here. No street car. No nothing. You've got to hoof it, Sally June."

But the sun was unduly pessimistic about the situation it appeared. For even as Sally



## *April and Sally June*

June prepared rather soberly to "hoof it," a dark blue motor car of expensive make was rounding a curve of the road, going toward town. At the wheel was a familiar figure. Oh, joy! What luck! It was H. G. Hartley, one of the trustees of Hannah Barr, a benevolent old gentleman with side whiskers whose little daughters were pupils of Sally June's. Surely dear old H. G. would get her back to the school in time and no questions asked. Sally June cheered up.

Sally June also put on her prettiest manner of charming deference to years, combined with a judicious blend of winsome, girlish appeal. Not for nothing had she been trained as a minister's daughter. Would Mr. Hartley be so kind as to give her a lift? It was so late and she was just a little tired. Register faint note of pathos here. She had walked much farther than she had realized. Was so anxious to get back for Vespers. Oh, yes, she knew she shouldn't have come so far alone. It had been very thoughtless of her. But the day had been so perfect she hadn't been able to resist

## *April and Sally June*

it. Oh, thanks so much. It would be such a favor.

And in two minutes Sally June was seated comfortably in the dark blue motor car most improperly thinking that after all it didn't pay to be too good. Here she had done quite the wrong things, from Miss Bainbridge's point of view and yet was she not coming out just as well, or better than if she hadn't? Certainly the wicked did sometimes flourish like the green bay tree, thank goodness!

Then she turned to pay attention to her benefactor who was protesting somewhat floridly that the favor was all on his side, that he was more than delighted to have Miss Sally June's charming company. Bit lonely riding alone, you know. Much more pleasure in it when you had a companion, particularly such a — ahem! — such an exceedingly pretty one.

Oh, dear, why did these old men think they had to be so tiresomely gallant? It didn't become their gray whiskers. Still, beggars mustn't — and so forth.

Sally June was an eminently tactful young

person and well skilled in the strategy of conversation. She had had to practice on parishioners all her life. She very shortly had the talk ably directed to the subject of Emily and Maude and how well they were doing in school. Maude really was developing a decided talent for writing. Her themes were very good indeed for such a young girl. Now Emily had a more mathematical mind. Miss Davis said she was remarkably quick at her algebra. Unusual for a girl, wasn't it? Boys were ordinarily so much better at that sort of thing, didn't he think?

H. G. rose to the bait promptly and discoursed proudly of his daughters and even more proudly of his own feats of scholarship in the by gone years.

From these topics they drifted to the weather, to the May day festival which was coming off presently, to the bad cold Mrs. Hartley was suffering from, to the small granddaughters whom he had just been to visit over the hills in Granddale, to the new organ for the Baptist Church. And all the while,

## *April and Sally June*

underneath, Sally June was wishing rather worriedly that H. G. would drive a little less cautiously. If he didn't step on the gas pretty soon she would be late anyway for all her pains. What was he going at such a snail's pace for? Was it out of deference to the Sabbath or — ?

And all of a sudden Sally June discovered the answer to her question. The car came to an abrupt stop in a wooded bend of the road and H. G. was crushing her into his arms, bestowing flabby, soft, hateful kisses on her cheeks and lips.

With an exclamation of wrath and disgust, Sally June pulled away from him. That he should dare — the old rascal — pretending to be so church going and sanctimonious — to kiss her like that — Oh, hateful — unendurable! She struggled harder to disentangle herself from those distasteful enfolding arms.

“Don't try to get away, little girl,” he was murmuring in what were doubtless meant to be tones of ineffable tenderness. “Nobody

## *April and Sally June*

will ever know. You little beauty! I could just smother you with kisses. You're so sweet, little Sally June!"

But H. G.'s senile flare of passion was doomed to be instantly and efficiently quenched. Sally June wrenched a hand free and delivered a sharp, stinging blow straight in her tormentor's face.

He drew back, his arms relaxing involuntarily, his face working ludicrously, the slave of various mixed emotions.

Taking advantage of his momentary discomfiture, Sally June flung open the door of the car and leaped out.

"You old hypocrite!" she hurled back at him. "How dared you? Oh!" And Sally June covered her hot cheeks with her hands in shame and misery.

"You damned young vixen!" he blazed back, fairly beside himself with anger and outraged dignity. "I'll teach you better manners. I'll teach you to strike me. You little fool! Don't you know that I can ruin you — take your job away from you like that —"

## *April and Sally June*

He snapped his fingers viciously in emphasis to his menace.

“ I don’t care if you can,” flashed Sally June recklessly. “ I don’t care if you do. You’re a disgusting old man. And you ought to know better than to behave like that — at your age.”

If Sally June had known it her words stung far more sharply than had the blow from her strong, young, right hand. H. G. had been a beau and a heart breaker in his day, and still considered himself a charmer of what he was pleased to call the “ weaker sex.” To be called by a pretty girl in a tone of unmistakable loathing, “ A disgusting old man!” To be reminded that at his age he should have known better! Sally June’s goose was, indeed, cooked.

“ You’ll be sorry, you little fool!” puffed the benevolent gentleman, looking almost as benevolent at the moment as an old goat about to butt something as near kingdom come as possible. “ You’ll see.” And with a final threatening shake of his doubled fist in Sally



## *April and Sally June*

June's direction, H. G., trustee of Hannah Barr, church deacon and director of the biggest bank in Cameronville, set his motor going.

In a moment only the dust of the big car was visible and Sally June stood in the road, with trembling knees and burning cheeks and a sick feeling in her heart, five miles from Cameronville and the sun just setting.

What was she to do? What could she do but plod back to town, get there after dark and take Miss Bainbridge's scolding as meekly as she could, knowing she deserved it? Anyway, she'd never breathe a word about old H. G. Hartley — the beast!

Slowly, all the joy of April squeezed out of her heart, Sally June turned. Above the low line of purpling hills, the western sky was a sea of pure gold and rose and amethyst. She caught her breath with something that was almost a sob. Such beauty, such serene, austere peace up there! While down here, on earth, she — Sally June — had been kissed by a pasty faced, hateful old man, made to feel

## *April and Sally June*

cheap and soiled and tarnished! It didn't seem as if she could bear it.

Well, she would wait a minute anyway and watch the sunset. Being a little bit later now couldn't matter. Might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb. Somehow she had to purify herself of that loathsome kiss, feel clean again like the sky and the far blue hills and the star just coming out, pale gold, above them.

Deliberately Sally June climbed the buttercup sprinkled slope which led up from the road to the rail fence that hemmed in a wide stretch of meadow, behind which loomed darkly, a young grove of maples.

Mounting the fence she perched upon its topmost rail, a brave, yet also, rather pathetic little figure, silhouetted against the sky, trying to purge her soul of grossness by bathing it in beauty.

But even the sunset failed Sally June on this occasion. In spite of herself, tears welled up in her eyes. It was wicked, shameful, that a horrid old man should spoil her April day

## *April and Sally June*

like that. And what would he do? Would he really act as spitefully as he threatened? Would he really snatch away her work from her? Sally June did not always think much of being Instructress in English Literature and Rhetoric in Hannah Barr Female Institute, but she liked far less the idea of having to leave it in disgrace, without a recommendation, forced to go back with lowered head to Aunt Luella, who always looked at her suspiciously enough in any case, as her mother's daughter, and therefore predestined to no good anyway.

"It can't happen. It just can't," cried Sally June desperately to the sunset. "He wouldn't be so mean. He couldn't."

And yet was there any meanness too mean for a man who could kiss her like that just after talking about his little daughters and his nice, kind devoted wife? She wasn't sure. She was rather afraid not.

"Oh, I hate men!" declared Sally June emphatically to the April dusk and jumped down from the fence. The bank on which she leaped

## *April and Sally June*

was steep and there were treacherous rolling stones lying hidden among the buttercups.

The next instant she was lying in an ignominious little heap in the gutter, her gray frock torn on a bramble and crumpled under her, the precious rose colored hat wrong side up in the grass just out of reach.

Sally June tried to get to her feet but fell back again with a half suppressed cry of pain.

“Damn!” she muttered. I grant you it was a most improper word, especially to emanate from a minister’s daughter. But we must record the truth and the naughty word was actually the one uttered, uttered with considerable force and fervency too. Sally June had sprained her ankle and sprained it badly.

Sitting up and pulling herself to the bank, she strained her ears to listen if there might be another car coming along the road. Not much chance, worse luck! Night was already descending, the road little frequented. Still she listened, hoping.

A whip-poor-will called plaintively out of the dark. Frogs peeped shrilly from the

## *April and Sally June*

swampy meadows. Crickets chirped all around her in the grass. The wind made a soft, whispering noise in the poplars overhead. Nothing else. Sally June listened in vain, her heart getting heavier, her ankle hurting harder, every minute.

And then out of the clear night air, there did come a sound, unexpected, thrilling, romantic. It was the far off beat, beat of horse's hoofs.



### *Chapter III*

BY the time the horse and rider were in sight, Sally June had managed to be sitting decorously, though forlornly on a stone, her gray frock smoothed out a little and her hair pins — what she could find of them — restored to their rightful place in her bonny locks. The rose colored hat, however, lay where it had fallen among the buttercups.

Of course, it was the stranger of the brief encounter of the morning. Sally June had known it would be as soon as she had heard the faint, far off beat of hoofs. There were no other riders in Cameronville. Everybody who could afford it had a motor car. Everybody who couldn't went afoot, or used the street cars. But anyway, aside from this, something inside Sally June told her precisely who was coming. She did not say it to herself or even definitely think it. But she knew that it was



## *April and Sally June*

Romance that was riding to her, out of the night.

And in spite of the sorriness of her plight, in spite of the horrid scene she had just passed through, in spite of the vicious ache in her ankle, Sally June felt excited and nonsensically happy.

Does that shock you, Dear Reader? Does it seem incredible that a really nice girl like Sally June should be so interested in a total stranger? Be honest, Dear Reader. Surely you were once young yourself. Surely you know April magic. Blame April, not Sally June.

The rider checked his horse to a full halt as he beheld Sally June sitting meekly by herself on her cold, cold stone.

“Good Lord and all his little saints!” he ejaculated in amazement. “May I ask what you are doing there?”

His voice was as nice as his gray eyes and Sally June couldn't resist the impulse to smile up at him and when Sally June smiled she was utterly adorable, though far be it from us to

## *April and Sally June*

suggest that she knew it and used its power for the devastation of the sons of Adam.

“I’m meditating on my sins,” she said demurely, a demureness somewhat contradicted by an irrepressible sparkle in her eyes. Sally June’s eyes just would dance. They were born unmanageable. Hers was a laughing star.

The stranger smiled too. And Sally June liked his smile. He seemed to smile with his eyes more than with his mouth, she thought.

“Is it going to take you very long to get through the list?” he inquired. “It is getting dark and this is a very lonely road. No place at all for a person as pretty as you to be staying if you will pardon my impertinence in telling you so. In fact I rather think I ought to dismount and scold you roundly for being here.”

“Do,” invited Sally June. “Maybe if you made me sufficiently penitent — or sufficiently angry — I’d forget how badly my foot hurts.”

The smile went out of his eyes promptly at

## *April and Sally June*

that and he did dismount speedily. In an instant he was beside Sally June.

He was very tall, she discovered, even taller than she had fancied, and very much tanned. His hair was dark and just a little gray behind his temples. And there was a faint, rather fascinating, red thread of a scar on one cheek. His eyes were just as nice as Sally June had been sure they were at a distance.

It was very reprehensible of her, no doubt. Later when she had time, she could be as properly ashamed as she could manage. But just for the moment she was glad she hadn't got back for Vespers, almost glad she had sprained her ankle, certainly glad it was this man of all the men in the world that had found her and was bound by all the laws of chivalry to rescue her, a damsel in distress.

"What is the matter with your foot?" he demanded.

Sally June explained the catastrophe.

"Let me see it," commanded the stranger.

Meekly Sally June thrust out the troubled member, neatly shod in gray silk stocking and

## *April and Sally June*

low heeled, black, strapped pump. Seeing it she uttered an exclamation of surprise. She had not realized it was swelling so dreadfully. And, oh, how it hurt! Worse than all the toothaches she had ever had rolled into one big ache. Just for a minute she felt very sorry for herself and just a wee bit faint with pain.

The stranger knelt beside her on the grass feeling of the injured ankle in an impersonal, business like fashion, like an old family doctor, Sally June thought gratefully.

“ I — I don’t believe I can walk on it,” she remarked soberly.

“ I should rather say you couldn’t. Looks like a bad sprain. Now then, what am I to do with you? Take you back to town on Jerry, Lochinvar fashion? No, I suppose that won’t do. You belong at Hannah Barr, don’t you? ”

So he had remembered her. A little spurt of pleasure in that fact darted up through Sally June’s pain.

“ Alas, yes,” was what impulse prompted her to reply, but prudence insisted on the “ yes ” alone.

## *April and Sally June*

He stood meditating a moment, looking down at the small figure in gray.

"The best I can suggest is to take you to my place which is only about two miles from here—the nearest house at that. Then I can bandage your ankle and get you back to the school in my car. Will that do?"

It would do splendidly. So Sally June pronounced gratefully.

"I am afraid I'm being an awful nuisance," she added. "I just couldn't imagine what was going to become of me. I had visions of having to sit here all night, getting colder and lonelier and scarier and hungrier every minute."

He chuckled a little at that and stooping, patted her shoulder comfortingly as he might have done to a child frightened of a bug-a-boo.

"Poor wee lassie!" he said sympathetically.

"Oh!" cried Sally June. "You're Scotch." Her own people, a generation or so back had been "Bonnet Lairds." She loved the Scottish manner of speech.

## *April and Sally June*

“My grandfather was,” he admitted. “Now then, with your permission, I shall pick you up bodily and put you on Jerry’s back.”

“Must you? I fear I’m frightfully heavy,” demurred Sally June, in genuine compunction. “Maybe I could take a few steps if I leaned on you.”

For answer he swooped down and gathered her up in his arms. Before she could do more than draw a breath, Sally June found herself on the back of the black horse. She had forgotten that horses had such amazingly broad backs and that the ground beneath their feet was so alarmingly far away. Still she rather liked her novel position and Jerry, for all his bigness, seemed very friendly, as he turned an inquiring gaze in her direction.

“Now then, Jerry, just a minute, while we go back after the lady’s bonnet. It is much too pretty to be left for the meadow larks to nest in. You remember we noticed it this morning.”

Jerry thrust his pink nose against his master’s shoulder and looked as if he wanted to



## *April and Sally June*

say, "Of course, I remember perfectly. Do get it by all means. It would be a thousand pities to leave that hat behind."

In another moment the man was back, presented the rose colored hat to its owner with a grave bow and then somehow or other, he had mounted Jerry too, and was behind Sally June, one arm around her to keep her in her somewhat precarious position.

"Home, Jerry, now. We've first aid work to do. Fly."

And Jerry flew. Indeed it seemed like real flight through air to Sally June. The wind whistled by her ears. The stars came out overhead. Sally June's own eyes shone like stars too. This was Adventure. Even in Cameronville, something had happened — something wonderful, incredible but delightful. In spite of her ankle she could have sung to the stars for joy.

Funny! She didn't mind this man's arm around her in the least. It wasn't a bit like that hideous, beastly clasp of that hateful old man this afternoon. Oh, why did she have to

## *April and Sally June*

remember that now — when she was so happy? But she did have to remember and remembering shivered.

The protecting arm drew a little closer around her.

“Cold?” asked a solicitous voice.

“Not a bit,” denied Sally June. It hadn’t been that kind of a shiver at all. “It’s wonderful, isn’t it?” she said. “Going fast like this — like riding the wind. I love it.”

He did not answer but somehow Sally June knew he understood and liked her liking it. Perhaps he too, found it rather wonderful. Sally June hoped so in her heart.

“Just up the lane and we’ll be home,” he said a few minutes later.

Sally June looked around her. She had not been noticing much where they were going. Why, they were going up that avenue of pines, up to that wonderful, old white house with pillars that nobody lived in! Whose house was it? Didn’t somebody say it was the Reverend Morrisson’s? It seemed as if she had

## *April and Sally June*

heard that somewhere though of course he had a fine house in town — the one his wife built.

Impulsively she voiced her question. Wasn't it the Reverend Morrisson's house?

"No," said the man behind her quietly. "As it happens it is my house though I've not been in it until now for fifteen years or more."

"Oh," said Sally June, still a little puzzled but too well bred to ask more questions.

They had sped up the long driveway now and were approaching the stately old house which she had always admired, set behind its magnificent avenue of pines.

"Wait a minute, Jerry. Not so fast, my lad. Oats will keep. Ladies must be served first."

Instantly Jerry stood motionless, waiting, obedient to his master's word.

By now the master had dismounted, had Sally June in his arms.

"Right O, Jerry. Stable, now."

And waiting no further suggestion, Jerry galloped off stableward to his well earned supper.

## *April and Sally June*

Sally June found herself in a spacious room, the walls lined with old portraits and immense gold framed mirrors. The furniture was all fine old mahogany which shone in the light of the great candelabra in the centre which her host ordered to be lit while he examined Sally June's injured foot.

A tall, grave negro woman, her head swathed in a white turban and wearing a white dress which almost swept the floor, removed Sally June's slipper and silk stocking while a small black elfin like boy stood by with bowls of water, hot and cold and cloths for compresses.

But it was the host of the white house whom the old woman called " Master Douglas " that wrapped the bandages finally around Sally June's bare, swollen ankle, every motion deft and sure, without waste of energy or undue haste, the procedure of a person used to acting in emergencies and knowing precisely what to do when they occurred.

" You must know a lot about nursing and

## *April and Sally June*

first aid," murmured Sally June. "You're wonderful at it."

"Ought to know something about it," he answered tranquilly. "You can't knock about all over the world as I have and see four years of war without getting a bit of experience."

"War!"

Sally June's heart beat a little quicker. She could never think of the war without emotion. Three gallant young Georgia cousins had gone "over there" and had never come back. And her Dear Dad had gone too, as a chaplain, well along in years as he was, and with a bad heart at that. He too, lay under a cross in France. Oh, yes, the war meant something to Sally June, young as she had been when the armistice came.

She looked at "Master Douglas" tying the last knot in his skilfully applied bandage. The scarlet thread of scar on his cheek took on a new and sacred significance in her eyes. It seemed a true Croix de Guerre to her and the man who bore it a hero.

## *April and Sally June*

Then she remembered what he had said.

“Four years?” she questioned a little puzzled. “We weren’t in it but two — less than two.”

“We,” returned “Master Douglas” “were a bit too slow getting into it for my liking. I went on ahead with the Tommies.”

“Oh!” cried Sally June thrilling. “That was splendid of you.”

He smiled at her young enthusiasm.

“Not at all, my dear young lady,” he denied. “I didn’t go into it to be splendid. It was an ugly job to be done and I was glad to help do it though it’s not staying done so well as I wish it were. But mostly I went into it as a good many others did — for the adventure, the experience, entirely egotistic motives. I had tried nearly everything at one time or another. I’d never happened to try shell fire and bayonets. So I went over and — came back. Now then, that is the best I can do with this foot of yours. The next thing is to get you back to Hannah, before she damns you eternally for being here at all.”



## *April and Sally June*

Sally June opened her eyes a little wider.

“ Why should she? ”

He smiled somewhat grimly Sally June thought.

“ Because, my dear little Miss Gray Frock, I’m supposed to be a very, very ebony hued sheep indeed. I’m not sure but Hannah Barr would think it better for you to have been left alone all night by the roadside than to have been a half hour beneath my roof — with me.”

“ But that’s — nonsense,” declared Sally June stoutly. “ I don’t believe you are a black sheep and if you were, nobody could object to your bringing me here when my foot was so bad.”

“ Maybe not. We’ll hope for the best,” he flung back, still smiling a little. “ I’ll go and order the car.”

He went out leaving Sally June alone on the couch which was covered with a gorgeous Oriental drapery all stiff with gold and scarlet embroidery, a rather oddly incongruous piece of exoticism amid the dignified splendor of the pre-bellum outfitting of the drawing room.

## *April and Sally June*

Was he really a black sheep? Sally June wondered, then dismissed the interrogation indignantly. He was nice. And when Sally June knew a man was what she called " nice " he just naturally couldn't be a black sheep too. That was all there was to it. Sally June sighed a little. She wished that she needn't be rushed off quite so soon to the school. After all when Adventures came so rarely it was cruel to snip them off too short, to swallow them so fast one hardly knew what they tasted like. Sally June desired to savor hers, sip it slowly, enjoy it down to the last drop.

She looked about her. The candle lit chandelier cast weird, fascinating shadows everywhere. The room was full of old memories. You felt them all around you like a perfume. Old laughter, old tears, old joys, old pain, old dreams, old love. Yet there was something else here too. Something that was not old, and yet, in another sense, was as old as the very stars. Something as young as April, as full of pulsing life as the song of the mocking bird out there in the moon bathed garden.

## *April and Sally June*

The room was aquiver with it. Sally June could not name the Presence nor tell how she knew it was there. It eluded her as a bit of music, a haunting line of poetry eludes one. It eluded and at the same time enchanted her. She rather thought she did not wish to lay hands upon it, to hold it fast.

“ Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
Are sweeter.”

And then “ Master Douglas’s,” step on the floor and “ Master Douglas ” himself standing beside her, looking down at her with an expression which she could not interpret. It too eluded her like the something which filled the room and which she could not or did not or dared not name.

“ I am very sorry,” he said after a moment. “ But Denny, my man, has an incurable propensity for taking the car to pieces and putting it together again at his leisure, like a small boy with a watch. I told him I shouldn’t need it today so he indulged in his favorite pastime. It will take him perhaps an hour to assemble

## *April and Sally June*

the thing. Do you mind very much staying here another hour — with me? ”

“ I rather think I'd like it,” said Sally June honestly.

His eyes smiled. Sally June knew that he was pleased with her answer.

“ That's good,” he returned heartily. Meanwhile I've ordered supper to be brought in. You must be starving.”

“ All but,” admitted Sally June. “ You are awfully kind to me. I can't thank you. But first, I suppose I ought to telephone Miss Bainbridge so she won't have the town crier out after me. May I? ”

“ Certainly. But if I may be pardoned the suggestion it might be wiser to go a little light on the details. Miss Bainbridge may be apoplectic and we'd hate to have her demise on our hands.” The speaker's tone was faintly ironic.

“ Oh, I'll just tell her quick that I've sprained my ankle and that I am being brought home by — by friends — a little later and then hang up before she can ask questions.”

## *April and Sally June*

"Precisely. Speed is everything in these cases," he smiled back at Sally June who was sparkling at the idea of the small conspiracy and sparkling perhaps too at the thought that the Adventure wasn't going to be snipped off just yet. There was still a lot of very fizzy champagne in the glass.

"And where is the phone? Let me hobble to it — get it over quick."

"In the next room. You may not hobble to it. You are forbidden to step. I shall carry you."

"Oh!" cried Sally June. "Shall you?" And to her intense annoyance with herself she blushed.

He did not appear to notice the blush but bent down and lifted her into his arms, bandaged bare foot and all and bore her off into the room just beyond, behind the dark maroon velvet curtains. This room, unlike the other was oddly austere. A dark plain rug on the floor, walls lined with books, a huge oak table in the centre littered with papers, straight

## *April and Sally June*

backed, puritanic looking chairs, a typewriter. A few Japanese prints on the wall. Pipes on the mantel and more books, books everywhere—in the window ledges, on the floor, on the chairs. As they entered, a huge Great Dane rose and stretched himself stiffly from his nap on the cool tiles before the fireplace. He came toward them, perfectly friendly but also obviously a bit curious about this stranger guest in his master's arms.

“Hello, Horatio. Sorry to disturb you, old man. But we have to use the phone. Allow me to introduce Mademoiselle April. I picked her up from among the buttercups. You’ll like her,” and gravely “Master Douglas” deposited his burden on the table, on top of the papers and went to bring the phone to her reach.

Sally June stooped and patted the great dog’s magnificent old head.

“Good evening, Horatio. I’m delighted to meet you,” she said as he raised kindly, patient eyes to her face. “I see you have



## *April and Sally June*

Chaucer over there behind you, Horatio. Don't you think that phrase 'a varray parfait, gentil knight' rather suits your master? I do. Nobody could have been kinder than he to a maiden all forlorn, dumped down among the buttercups after dark with a sprained ankle."

Sally June lifted her eyes to her host's smiling ones.

"Really, I mean it. You have been wonderful to me."

"Who wouldn't be kind to a — Mademoiselle April?" He countered quietly.

And then Sally June got Miss Bainbridge on the telephone. Briefly she explained her predicament and, as hastily as might be, hung up the receiver.

"There is that off our minds," she announced cheerfully.

"And the next thing to be recommended is food," said "Master Douglas."

But Sally June once having won her reprieve was in no mind to be hurried.

"May I stay here just a moment and look

## *April and Sally June*

around? I'm green with envy when I see your books."

"You like books?"

"Love them," sighed Sally June. "I've never had enough of them or enough time to read them. And what—" Her eyes went to the papers strewn around her on the table. "What am I sitting on?"

"Only a play. A very quiet one. Nothing explosive. You're quite safe."

"A play!" gasped Sally June wide eyed. "You write plays?"

"Not plays yet. It is still in the singular. This that you see is, I hope, going to be my second. Mostly I'm a novelist—if anything."

Sally June's eyes went wider still. As she had said, she loved books and to be a writer of them she thought must be the most splendid thing in the world. She looked at her host a little awed.

"Oh!" she said after a minute, a very expressive little "oh!" "May I see some of them, please?" she begged humbly, like a child

## *April and Sally June*

who is asking to be allowed to play with something very precious, ordinarily kept on a very high shelf.

He laughed at her tone.

“Some time,” he promised. “Not now. We’re too hungry. Child, don’t you know better than to get an author started on the subject of his works? There is nothing more dangerous particularly on an empty stomach. Besides time flies and supper waits. Out you go to the other room, Sally June. You see, I discovered your name by eavesdropping while you talked with Hannah. It’s a delightful name too. Suits you almost as well as Mademoiselle April. Here we go.”

And indeed, here they went straightway back into the drawing room which they had vacated, Sally June not even making a pretense of protest this time against being carried. She was getting used to the somewhat masterful ways of the gentleman who was her host and indeed, rather liked them.

During their absence, Anna, the stately old negress, had set a table beneath the rainbow

## *April and Sally June*

prismed chandelier, a table decked with lovely old English china, iridescent glass, shining, quaint silver, the whitest and richest of damask, a great bowl of old fashioned yellow roses in the centre. Two tall backed mahogany chairs were placed for the diners, a hassock for Sally June's injured foot.

"Oh," cried Sally June delighted. "I always thought this house was an enchanted one, sitting way back up here behind the pines, so white and tall, like a magic palace, which somebody built to music, in a minute. Now, I know I was right. It is enchanted. Are you Merlin and where do you keep your wand?" Sally June looked around the room searching.

Her host smiled rather gravely at that, looking across the bowl of roses at Sally June, pink cheeked, starry eyed, athrill with her brave Adventure.

"I used to think it was enchanted too, long ago," he answered. "But the magic went away. I suppose the wand got lost. I have not seen it since I came back. Till now. Sally

## *April and Sally June*

June, you have the wand yourself. I see it in your eyes."

Suddenly he leaned forward and drew Sally June's hands in his, encircling the roses. Sally June did not draw away her hands. She left them lying there in his strong ones. She was glad to leave them.

"Little Sally June," he said gently. "Thank you a thousand times for coming, for bringing back the magic."

Sally June felt tears welling up from some deep place in her heart. She seemed to understand all at once how lonely this man had been, how bitter had been the blows life had dealt him, how happiness had again and again eluded him or come back boomerang fashion, transformed into sharp pain. How she understood these things Sally June did not know. Maybe it was part of the magic. But understand them she did, just as one understood, felt, music though it had no words.

Then the moment passed. Sally June's little hands were decorously back in her lap and her host was busily engaged in serving her

## *April and Sally June*

delicious food from under silver covered plates. It was the kind of a meal you would expect in a house of magic, Sally June thought, everything absolutely perfect. Fried chicken, mushrooms, tasting as no fried chicken and mushrooms had ever tasted before to Sally June, asparagus, crisp and tender, a marvellous salad, with a dressing mixed right on the spot by "Master Douglas," a heavenly concoction, thin bread and butter, strawberries and thick country cream, little sponge cakes, coffee more delicious than any Sally June had ever drunk. Even a bit of old wine to top with, remnant of an ancient cellar stock.

And such talk to go with it all! Talk that skipped and fluttered lightly and delightfully as a butterfly flits from flower to flower in sunshine! Talk of books, poetry, operas, of old cathedrals and Shinto temples, of far away cities — Rome, Venice, Madrid, Cairo, Peking, London, Paris, Colombo — all places that Sally June knew about and loved in fancy but had never seen and all places that her host knew well and talked about fascinatingly! He



## *April and Sally June*

seemed to have been everywhere, seen everything. Talk of strange faiths and occult philosophies, of Hindu fakirs and orange clad Buddhist priests, of strange old shrines under remote skies, of deserts and mountains, of beauty everywhere, even in most unexpected places, the "light that never was, on sea or land!"

Sally June drank it all in as a thirsty person drinks at a deep, clear pool. This was talk such as Dear Dad had loved and which Sally June had missed so desperately since he had stayed "over there," under his quiet little cross in France. No one else that Sally June knew talked it, not Arthur or Professor Payne, with all their erudition, not the Reverend Morrisson with all his flowing oratory and exuberance of words, not even dear Miss Serena with her rare, beautiful other-worldness. There was glamor to it, it fairly gave forth rainbow lights like a waterfall in sunshine. It was itself a living thing.

Finally Sally June set down her empty tiny, crystal wine glass with a sigh.

## *April and Sally June*

“It has been so wonderful,” she said. “Like reading a fascinating book which one has to shut again and put back on the shelf, long before one comes to the end. Isn’t that your car I hear out there?”

“I am afraid it is, Sally June. And I am afraid I must let you go. Madame Grundy has a permanent residence in Cameronville, more’s the pity. But even in Cameronville there must be lucky days — as well as nights. Maybe we’ll meet again, Mademoiselle April. I can’t think it possible that we shouldn’t.”

“Of course we shall meet,” said Sally June earnestly. “And please, you will send me one of your books to read, won’t you?”

He looked at her a bit quizzically.

“Maybe. But I’ll wait till you ask me again, Sally June. It is just possible you may not want to read them after you have heard what Cameronville has to say about me.”

“Poof!” dismissed Sally June confidently. “I don’t care what Cameronville says. I don’t believe you are a black sheep at all. It is just Cameronville’s silly notion.”

## *April and Sally June*

“ Master Douglas ” smiled at that but his smile was again a little grim Sally June thought. She knew with that odd clairvoyance which seemed hers tonight that some time Cameronville had hurt this man, a hurt which perhaps still rankled.

“ We’ll see whether you can keep on poofing, Sally June. I shall not blame you if you can’t. At any rate we have had tonight which is a great deal. Thanks again for that, Mademoiselle-from-among-the Buttercups.”

“ The thanks are quite on the other side. You’ve been so good to me, but now — I suppose I really must go.”

He rose.

“ I fear you must. I am not going into town with you. It’s better not. I’ll send Anna and she and Denny will take splendid care of you and carry you to the arms of Hannah. I hope your ankle won’t act too badly. It’s rather a nasty twist.”

Sally June assured him that she was certain the ankle would do finely. He had treated it so well.

## *April and Sally June*

And then Anna came, in answer to her master's ring and received his instructions as to the disposition of Sally June and her injured member.

Anna disappeared and returned in a moment, a dark cloak over her white dress and bearing in her hands a gorgeous embroidered shawl of heavy crepe, white with huge scarlet roses and masses of gold and silver interlacing in the background. Sally June exclaimed with delight over it. She had never seen anything so beautiful in her life.

"Missy will need it," Anna announced in the quiet, authoritative way she had. "The night is cool."

"Master Douglas" nodded approval of her thoughtfulness.

"Good for you, Anna. Now then, Mademoiselle April, let's wrap you up in this splendor. It came from Pekin and it once belonged to a beautiful Mandarin princess. It ought to make you dream rare dreams to-night."

"Lovely," cooed Sally June, caressing the

rich silk with her fingers. "May I really wear it? I shall feel like a princess myself. Thanks so much. It is just more of the magic, you see."

"Go out and tell Denny we are coming," "Master Douglas" ordered Anna. "Have the door of the car open. I'll bring Miss Sally June and pop her straight in so she won't have to put her foot on the earth."

Privately Sally June thought she never would put foot on earth again after this dream of an evening. She would be a sky traveller forever. But she did not speak her thought aloud. She was a little afraid to let "Master Douglas" suspect quite how wonderful the evening had been for her.

Anna went out and Sally June found herself being wrapped in the Mandarin princess shawl. And then she found herself being gathered up, shawl and all, in the arms of her host.

For a moment he stood, absolutely motionless and silent, looking down at the girl. Then

## *April and Sally June*

without warning, he bent over and kissed her.

“Sally June — Mademoiselle April — do you know what a darling you are?” he asked, his voice low but with a vibration of emotion in it that set something pulsing through Sally June’s whole being in answer to it. “You have given me the happiest evening I’ve known for years. Forgive me for kissing you. You see, I am a black sheep, after all or I wouldn’t have done it. Am I forgiven?”

“You are not a black sheep,” denied Sally June hotly. “But all the same you — you shouldn’t have kissed me,” she reproved, flaming cheeked.

But somehow he did not look as remorseful as he should have done as he stood, Sally June in his arms, his eyes smiling.

“Are you sorry that I did?” he challenged.

“N — no,” murmured Sally June with downcast eyes. “I don’t believe I am, but — but I ought to be.”

He laughed out at that as if the answer were precisely right and then, without another



## *April and Sally June*

word, carried Sally June out into the wide hall, across the pillared porch and down the steps and finally "popped" his burden straight into the waiting car.

A brief exchange of "Goodnight" between host and guest and then, Denny, the pleasant faced Irish chauffeur, started the car, which rolled smoothly down the avenue between the rows of tall, guardian pines.

Sally June looked back, as all women will do, since the time of Lot's wife, metaphorically and literally. On the steps stood "Master Douglas" still as a statue, the old house forming a majestic background for his tall, finely moulded figure. The great dog had come to stand beside him. The man's face was uplifted and Sally June thought it had an almost supernatural beauty and power as the light from the lanterns on either side of the steps fell full upon it.

Suddenly she remembered with a start of dismay that she did not even know his last name, nor he, hers. And yet he had kissed her and she had loved his kiss.

*April and Sally June*

Oh, Sally June, how far, how very far, your  
April day had lured and led you! And what  
would the morrow bring?

Sally June scarcely cared.

She had had tonight.



## *Chapter IV*

**M**ONDAY morning brought great excitement to the "young ladies" of Hannah Barr. Miss Sally June had become, over night, the heroine of a thrilling adventure though nobody knew precisely what had happened. That she had sprained her ankle somehow or other was obvious. For was she not having classes on the porch facing out over the rose garden, lying on a couch, like a queen, holding court of her loyal subjects, who draped themselves around her and sat, literally and figuratively, at her feet?

But how the picturesque sprained ankle had been acquired and to whom had belonged the car that had brought her back to the school rather late last evening nobody seemed able to discover. Various fantastic stories early got afoot but none of these it was possible to substantiate for Miss Hallie, who probably knew all about it, just looked wise and avoided an-

## *April and Sally June*

swering the would be delicate and skilful hints and questions aimed at her. And nobody dared ask Miss Sally June herself outright for, after all, though she was so young and pretty, Miss Sally June was still " Faculty " and an unsurmountable barrier rose between her and the " young ladies " in consequence, no matter how near to bursting with curiosity the latter might be.

Somebody suggested that it might have been the Morrissons' car. It was rumored that Mrs. Morrisson had just ordered one sent from somewhere — Paris, maybe. Mrs. Morrisson was always doing things like that, on the grand scale, so as to be different from her neighbors and show them how much richer she was than they. But no, it couldn't have been the Morrissons'. Their chauffeur was black as the ace of spades and wore livery and this man had been in khaki and had a round, red face. Old Tim had told them that much. He had helped carry Miss Sally June in and he knew. Besides there was a big negress in the car too and Dolly Morrisson's serv-

## *April and Sally June*

ants were all white. Zip! There went that theory.

It couldn't have been Professor Parkes either. Professor Parkes didn't have anything but a little old Ford and this was a great, big closed car. Besides if Professor Parkes had been there, would he have let a chauffeur carry Miss Sally June? Not much. Professor Parkes would have been tickled to death for a chance to carry her himself. He was just awfully in love with her.

No, it wasn't the car of any one in Cameronville that the "young ladies" were acquainted with. That was clear. But whose then? That was the question? And where had Miss Sally June been when she hurt her foot? Surely she hadn't been out walking alone so late. And where had she got the shawl that was wrapped around her when the negro woman and Tim helped her to her room? Evelyn had just had her door open a crack to slip out and into Minna's where there was a fudge party going to take place a little later when everything was quiet enough to make it

## *April and Sally June*

safe. And she had seen Miss Sally June and the shawl too. Certainly nobody in Cameronville had a shawl like that.

Certainly not indeed. Minna had verified the truth of Evelyn's tale that very morning before breakfast. Miss Hallie had left the door open into Miss Sally June's room when she helped her down to breakfast and Minna had peeped in. There the shawl had been, neatly folded and lying over the foot of the bed — the most utterly gorgeous thing anybody could imagine. But after breakfast, the next time the door was open, the shawl had disappeared, much to the disappointment of a large number of curious damsels who had made a point of strolling by on purpose to see it.

It was Irma Elliot who aspired to be a scenario writer that made up the story which was the most satisfactory. Irma maintained that Miss Sally June had a mysterious Lover, an awfully rich person, with lots of big cars and hundreds of beautiful shawls and — and well, everything. And that by and by Miss



## *April and Sally June*

Sally June would go away and marry him, dressed in a white satin dress with a train three yards long, and a real lace veil with orange blossoms in it.

This was delightfully romantic. For almost a moment the whole group around Irma was rendered speechless by the splendor of the vision offered. Then the doubters began to find voice as doubters have an inconvenient way of doing.

If Miss Sally June was engaged to somebody frightfully rich why didn't she wear a diamond ring? And if it was his shawl and his car why hadn't he been there too with Miss Sally June? And where was he when she sprained her ankle? And for these queries Irma had no answer. Why should she? She had invented her theory out of cloth of gold because she adored Miss Sally June and thought if she hadn't a Lover of this princely Croesian cast she ought to have, that was all. Anyhow there was no harm in pretending, was there? Especially as nobody knew the true

## *April and Sally June*

tale of Miss Sally June's over night adventure.

Fair enough! How they all did envy Miss Bainbridge her God-and-the-trustee-given authority to question Miss Sally June as she was certainly doing that afternoon, Miss Sally June having limped on her crutch into Miss Bainbridge's "office," by request, as the "young ladies" very well knew! How they would have loved to have been flies fluttering about the office, all ears, if flies had ears, to what was going on.

As a matter of fact, Miss Bainbridge herself was not entirely satisfied with the elucidation provided by Miss Sally June Fenton as to her remarkable experiences of yesterday. The whole affair seemed utterly unprecedented, unlike anything which had ever occurred in the annals of Hannah Barr. Miss Bainbridge disliked unprecedented things. They were obnoxious to her neat, card cataloguing mind.

"I understand, Miss Fenton, that you were walking alone until a rather late hour on a

lonely country road, a most imprudent proceeding and one which you must be very well aware we must most heartily discountenance. Is that correct? ”

Miss Bainbridge had rather small black eyes and they bored like gimlets into poor Sally June's consciousness as she asked the question. Sally June stirred her aching ankle restlessly on the foot stool on which it was supported and looking down at the ankle she replied meekly, “ Yes, Miss Bainbridge.”

“ Most inexcusable, Miss Fenton. I cannot think how you could be so remiss in the simple proprieties as to do a thing like that.”

Sally June did not reply. There seemed nothing she could say. If the simple proprieties forbade one from taking the road under blue sky on an April afternoon, she scarcely thought they were worth considering. But naturally this was not an opinion that could be handed on to Miss Bainbridge, grimly sitting in judgment. Instead one drooped and looked as dejected and small and penitent and chastened as was femininely possible.

## *April and Sally June*

“ And then,” proceeded Miss Bainbridge inexorably, “ I understand you sprained your ankle. But how did you sprain your ankle, Miss Fenton? It is most inconceivable that one could sprain one’s ankle simply walking on a country road.”

Sally June sighed faintly. So many things were inconceivable to Miss Bainbridge.

“ I sat on a fence to watch the sunset. Then I jumped off the fence and sprained my ankle,” she explained, trying to make the tale as simple and shorn of extraneous details as the story of Humpty Dumpty, which in some ways it paralleled.

“ Ah! You were sitting on a fence! ” Here was something tangible, reprovable. “ Surely a most undignified position for a member of the faculty of Hannah Barr to occupy. And at an hour when your duty plainly required you to be back at the school! I don’t wish to be unkind, Miss Fenton, but — ” The speaker paused a moment to let her eyes again bore into Sally June.

“ Oh, yes, you do,” thought Sally June

## *April and Sally June*

fiercely to herself. " You dote on being unkind. You simply love trying to make me feel like a vile worm wriggling round in the dust. I refuse — I positively refuse — to wriggle. I will not — I will not be a vile worm."

" I repeat, I do not wish to be unkind but I cannot help thinking that your unfortunate accident was meant as a punishment for your neglect of your obligations. I am sorry that you have sprained your ankle but I trust the pain will teach you a needed lesson."

Sally June sat silent, looking meek. But inside she was anything but meek. She was rankly, seethingly rebellious. Miss Bainbridge was not sorry about the ankle. She was glad. So, as it happened was Sally June, though for vastly different reasons.

" And then," Miss Bainbridge continued her inquisition in systematic, logical and chronological sequence, getting what Sally June indignantly called all the "kick" she could out of each stage of the investigation, " I gather that you stayed by the roadside a

## *April and Sally June*

considerable length of time unable to move. That was the case, Miss Fenton? ”

Again Sally June replied briefly, “ Yes, Miss Bainbridge.”

“ But what I cannot understand is why if the person whose name you seem most unaccountably not to know, came along in a car, he should not have taken you directly back to the school, instead of to a house in the opposite direction.”

Boring performance repeated. Sally June could fairly see the shavings curling up around the holes. She had not told Miss Bainbridge that the “ person ” had come along in a car. That had been Miss Bainbridge’s own mis-conclusion. Sally June had simply said she had been “ taken.” Miss Bainbridge’s over-logical mind had supplied the car which had not been there.

Sally June thought quick. After all why should she tell Miss Bainbridge about the black horse, galloping out of the darkness, about the man with the gray eyes and whimsical smile whose arm had been about her, hold-



ing her safe on the back of the black horse, the glorious flying through space? These things were none of Miss Bainbridge's business. They were Sally June's own little Adventure. She wasn't going to have that Adventure picked to pieces, and smirched and hung up on a stick, like a dingy old rag, to frighten birds away from cherries.

“There was something the matter with the car. The chauffeur had to work on it. It couldn't go so far until it was fixed.”

Thus Sally June told the truth, but not the whole truth, as she considered was her privilege as a free born American citizen over twenty one, albeit the incumbent of the Chair of English of a Female Institute.

To her relief Miss Bainbridge did not press the point.

“But where did this — this person — take you?” The inquisition proceeded.

“To his home. It was near, luckily and my ankle was very bad. The doctor said it would have been much worse if it hadn't had immediate attention.”

## *April and Sally June*

“Possibly. Possibly,” conceded Miss Bainbridge grudgingly. “But where was his home? Where did you go for this, no doubt, timely necessary first aid treatment?”

“I don’t know whether you know the place. It is some miles away from town. A big, white house with pillars, set up on a hill, with a lot of pine trees in front of it.”

Miss Bainbridge uttered a rather startled exclamation and stared hard at Sally June.

“A big, white house with pillars, on a hill! Miss Fenton, what did the man look like?”

“Look like?” Sally June was growing a bit restive. “Why, like any nice man. He was tall and a little gray and has a scar on his cheek, a war scar, I suppose.”

Miss Bainbridge fairly snorted.

“War scar, indeed! If he is the man I think he is, he didn’t get that scar in anything so honorable as war. It is not a story for a young girl’s ears, Miss Fenton, but you may take my word for it that the man is not one for a nice young woman to have anything to do with. It was exceedingly unfortunate that it

should have been he who came to your assistance. I would not have had it happen for anything, that you, a member of my Faculty, should have been alone with him under his roof for — how long was it? — an hour?" sharply.

"At least an hour." Sally June still clung firmly to the truth but not all of it. "But I wasn't alone. The servants were there."

"Servants!" sniffed Miss Bainbridge. "Easy enough to send servants out of the room."

Sally June flushed hotly and hated herself for the flush which she could feel burning through her cheeks, up to her hair. There had been that moment when the tall negress had been dismissed, when she had been quite alone in the man's arms and he had kissed her, a kiss that she had not resented. But that too was none of Miss Bainbridge's business.

"We weren't alone more than five minutes at any time," she protested, her asseverations still consonant with the truth.

"A very good thing, unless he has changed

## *April and Sally June*

a great deal and I don't fancy he has." Miss Bainbridge's tone was dry but she had not apparently observed the tell tale flush in Sally June's cheeks. She was too much engrossed in the matter at hand. "I am inclined to doubt," she added, "that there was anything the matter with the car. It would be like him to keep you there under false pretenses. The man has no sense of honor."

Sally June's cheeks flamed hotter still, this time with honest indignation.

"I am sure you are mistaken, Miss Bainbridge," she protested as coolly as she could. "I am sure he wouldn't have made up a story like that. And he was most — most considerate every minute. I can't think he can be the man you believe him to be. There must be a mistake," she repeated earnestly.

"I am positive that there is no mistake, Miss Fenton. Didn't you hear any one address him by name at all?"

"Yes," admitted Sally June, faintly reluctant. "Anna, the negro woman, called him 'Master Douglas.'"

“ Ah-h!” triumphantly. “ I thought there could be no mistake. The man’s name is Kincaid. Douglas Kincaid. And I should advise you to keep your own counsel as to what happened last night. Your presence at The Pines might be misunderstood. Douglas Kincaid is altogether too well known in Cameronville. I must forbid you to have anything whatever to do with the man.”

“ But Miss Bainbridge, surely I may write him a note of thanks for all he did for me last night? And I must send back the shawl. My foot hurt so last night I forgot it.”

“ I will see that the shawl is returned and will add your thanks to my own in a letter of proper appreciation. I will attend to the matter. You need give it no further consideration. That is all, for the present, Miss Fenton. I will ring for Tim to help you upstairs. You can give him the shawl. You would better go to bed for the rest of the day. You look rather feverish. Your dinner will be sent up to your room. I trust your ankle will not give you any pain tonight.”

## *April and Sally June*

As a matter of fact, Sally June scarcely remembered that she had a sprained ankle that night but she slept little more than she had the night before when it had ached so terribly.

She tossed about on her pillow, uneasy and unhappy, while the mocking bird outside poured his joy out into the night, in liquid golden melody. It was Sally June's heart tonight that ached terribly.

It was almost unbearable that "Master Douglas" must go unthanked for all his kindness, his "niceness," for that magic hour under the rainbow prised chandelier, for the supper — the talk — everything. It was unbearable that she might not write him one little note, speak a single word of acknowledgment. It wasn't fair. Hannah Barr did not own her, body and soul. She had a right to say her own thank you in her own way. She had half a mind to disregard orders, write him just one letter. What harm could it do? Who would know?

But in her heart Sally June knew that she couldn't do it. It was not in her to do an



underhand, illicit thing, to pretend to obey and really disobey. If she wrote Douglas Kincaid she would have to go to Miss Bainbridge and tell her she had done it and why. And then there would be an awful fuss and probably she would be fired. She couldn't afford to have a row, to give old H. G. a handle to twist, in revenge for her rebuff.

It wasn't fair. None of it was fair. But she had to submit to it. She must not even write three words, not even say "I thank you" to Douglas Kincaid. She had to let him think her a cowardly, ungrateful little prude who had made a brave pretense of believing in him to his face and then turned her back and listened with all her ears to the hateful things people said about him. She couldn't ask for any of his books though she wanted so much to read them. Oh, what a mess it all was! As a rule Sally June was not the weepy kind. She scorned tears. But tonight her pillow was very wet in the darkness.

The tears were not all because she could not write Douglas Kincaid and tell him she be-

lieved in him. If they were they would not have been quite so unbearable. A good many of them were shed because she wasn't sure she did believe in him. Maybe the horrid things they said about him were true. He had not once denied that he was a black sheep. She remembered that gossiping whisper behind her back last Sunday morning. Had it been this man of whom they had talked? Was it he that had once been engaged to Dolly Morrison and been thrown over by her because of some unpleasant scandal involving his name and that of a married woman? Sally June hated things like that. Marriage was to her a sacred thing, a man who played fast and loose with it, beneath contempt. And yet, she could not think of Douglas Kincaid as beneath contempt. She could not associate him with ugly things like that. She couldn't. She wouldn't. He wasn't like that. She would believe in him, no matter what they said. She had to.

So swung the pendulum. But there was Miss Bainbridge and her pledged word that this was no man for a nice girl to know, her

## *April and Sally June*

hateful sneer against the very scar that Sally June had revered, her cold phrase, "a man with no sense of honor," her poisonous suspicion that the story of the dismantled car had been merely a convenient invention to suit the purposes of the owner. Sally June remembered old H. G. who had pretended to be so fatherly and kind in order to get her off guard so that he might bestow his loathsome kisses. Douglas Kincaid had kissed her too. Oh, shame! And she had liked it. She had not struck him. She had smiled at him. Probably after she had gone he had laughed at her, thought of her, if he thought at all, as just another silly, little, free-for-any-man-to-kiss girl, like the rest. Cheap! Cheap! And Sally June hated cheapness more than anything else in the world. She couldn't bear it. She buried her face in the wet pillow. What had she done?

But as has been recorded Sally June was not naturally a weeping damsel. In a minute she sat up, gave the unpleasantly moist pillow an impatient flop and dried her eyes with a scrap

## *April and Sally June*

of a handkerchief which by a miracle had escaped the deluge. The moon was high enough now so that its light flooded the room, fell across the foot of the bed, where last night had hung the gorgeous Mandarin shawl, so beautiful, so exotic, so romantic, so filled with memories of the Wonderful Adventure, just passed, or was it just beginning? But tonight the moonlight fell on no scarlet and gold witchery. The shawl was gone. Gone too the Wonderful Adventure. The sawdust was coming out in streams from Sally June's doll, the doll whose name was Romance.

A tap at the door and Hallie Gerrard glided in softly, looking rather like a stray moonbeam herself with her white dress and silvery blonde hair.

"Sally June, are you asleep? Oh, I'm so glad. I just had to come. I can't go to bed and just sleep. I had to talk to somebody. May I stay?"

Without waiting to be invited formally Hallie curled herself up in the moonlight at the foot of Sally June's bed.

## *April and Sally June*

“Sally June, have you ever been in love?” she asked softly, ecstatically, like one in a dream. “Oh, no, I know you haven’t — not really,” she answered her own question in the same breath. “Oh, my dear, it is just too wonderful. You can’t imagine.”

Sally June propped herself among the pillows, luckily now dry side up and roused herself to play the familiar role of confidante. She even managed to laugh a little. Hallie was so absurd in her rhapsodies!

“Who is it this time?” she queried. “Joe Harris? Ned Baxter? Ned is nice, but he has no more sense than a jack rabbit. Don’t let him persuade you to elope with him. His father’s a regular old He-Tyrant and would think nothing of cutting Ned off with a ha’penny, if it suited him.”

Hallie laughed in dreamy scorn at that.

“Ned! Of course, it’s not Ned. I’ve not seen him for ages, nor Joe, either. They are just boys. It’s a man I love — a wonderful man. Oh, Sally June, I’m so proud — so humble. To think it is I he cares for, when

## *April and Sally June*

I'm so young and inexperienced and not clever a bit, or even very pretty. It — why, it's a miracle, Sally June. I understand him when his — when other people — don't. He says I understand him as nobody else ever has understood him. He lets me into the sacred places of his heart where no one else comes. I know how he suffers, how he longs for — for something he can never have. Oh, I'm so sorry for him. I could cry. And yet I'm so glad — so glad, that I can help him, that he loves me. Oh, Sally June, it's so wonderful — so wonderful. If you only knew — ”

“ Good Heavens,” groaned Sally June to herself. “ The worst case yet. What am I to do with her ? ”

“ Well, tell me then. Let me know. Who is this Miracle Man ? Do I know him ? ” she demanded out loud.

Even in the moonlight Sally June could see the other girl's rapt flush.

“ I can't tell you, Sally June — not even you. It is a secret. No one must guess. I've promised never to breathe it to a soul. He —



## *April and Sally June*

you see, he's not just anybody. He is awfully well known — a really great man. That is why we have to be so careful. No one must know — or — or see." Hallie's cheeks flamed rosier than ever as she poured out this confession.

Sally June looked honestly puzzled and more than a little worried. She did not like the sound of Hallie's great amour. The college boys were so much safer and saner. This thing looked about as prudent a combination as a child playing with a box of matches.

"But, Hallie, forgive me, I don't want to pry into your secret but is there any happiness in such a love affair? Wouldn't it be better if it could come out in the open? I am afraid of things that can't stand daylight on them, aren't you?"

Hallie clasped her hands, like a saint in adoration.

"Daylight! I think daylight is awfully crude and commonplace. Now, moonlight — why, tonight — alone out in the moonlight with him — Sally June, you asked if there was

## *April and Sally June*

any happiness in it? Happiness! There's Heaven."

"Hallie Gerrard! You have been meeting him at night — alone!"

There was sharp consternation in Sally June's tone. This was far worse than she had feared.

Hallie put up both hands over her cheeks.

"Oh, Sally June! I didn't mean to tell," she moaned. "Promise, promise you'll never breathe it to anybody."

"Of course, I'll not tell. What do you think I am, Hallie Gerrard? But all the same I don't like it. You mustn't do things like that, Hallie. Truly you mustn't. They would fire you quick as scat if they knew."

"I wouldn't care — not for myself. Of course, I'd care dreadfully for him. We — we don't meet often, Sally June. It — it's the first time — at night. And it was so wonderful — so — so sacred! Oh, Sally June, I wish you were in love, too, so you would understand."

And abruptly uncurling her small person

## *April and Sally June*

from the foot of the bed, Hallie came and put her arms around her friend, giving her a rapturous kiss, a kiss which the perturbed Sally June accepted as a vicarious offering, obviously meant for some one else, not present in the flesh.

“Don’t worry, Sally June. We’ll not — not do anything really wrong. There’s nothing wrong in a kiss, is there, Sally June? You know there isn’t.”

And in a moment she had slipped out of the room as noiselessly as she had come, leaving Sally June wide awake, alarmed, jarred at least out of her own troublous thoughts of self. What on earth would become of Hallie? The blessed moon struck little idiot!

But for once, Sally June knew a tender tolerance for moon struck idiocy, which would have been utterly impossible to her a week ago. April was teaching her something. Was it wisdom? Was it madness? Was it both together? Were they one and the same?

Tender tolerance for foolish little, susceptible, sentimental Hallie. Yes, but none for the

## *April and Sally June*

man who was leading her into such devious paths of risk and futility. Sally June thought that if there were a Hell, a specially hot corner ought to be reserved for men who, to feed their own overweening egotism hypnotized pretty, frail little moonbeams of girls, like Hallie into believing themselves desperately in love. Rotten! To let Hallie meet him at night like that! Nothing wrong in a kiss? Maybe not. It all depended.

Who was the creature anyway, this Miracle Man who cheerfully let Hallie take incredible risks and probably took mighty good care to run none himself? Sally June could not guess, try as she would, though she would gladly have given him a very generous piece of her mind had she had him there at the moment.

Anyway the thing had to be stopped. Hallie had to be jerked out of love somehow.

Love! Sally June found herself laughing a little ruefully at the word, as her hand touched the damp underside of her pillow.

So Hallie wished that she — Sally June —

## *April and Sally June*

were in love so that she might understand how wonderful it was. Thank Heaven she was nothing of the sort. Such wonderfulness was like the Reverend Morrisson's profile — a thing to be avoided if possible.

And then Sally June blushed hotly, remembering a certain kiss. Wonderful! Maybe so. Maybe not. Maybe it was rather terrible instead of wonderful, maybe it burned you up like a flame, made you feel as if life were a good deal like a volcano that might erupt any minute and devastate everything in sight. There were so many kinds of love. Some were rather like the green pastures of the psalm. Being married to Arthur might be rather like being in a green pasture. But in a green pasture might one not miss the possibility of — of a volcano? Sally June flushed again.

Anyway let Arthur come tomorrow night as he wanted. Only decent when he had been so generous with his flowers and books the minute he heard of her accident. Arthur, at any rate, was not taboo, at Hannah. Hannah beamed approval on college professors. Em-

## *April and Sally June*

inently respectable! Not a black hair in their wool. Didn't have to meet Arthur in secret, furtively, as Hallie had to meet her Miracle Man, as she, Sally June would have to meet —

Nonsense! She wasn't going to meet any one. She was going to sleep. Right now. So there. Tomorrow was a workaday world.

But before the morrow came Sally June did meet some one — in her dreams. It wasn't Arthur, either, at least, not at first. Just at first it was — or seemed to be — Dear Dad. Somebody anyway, fine, understanding and dear, like Dad. And then suddenly it was somebody else, somebody with gray eyes and a scar on his cheek, who laughed and said, "Oh, yes, I'm a black sheep. But women always love black sheep best." And then it was Arthur protesting, "You do want to be somebody's wife. Every girl does."

And then it was morning and the Rising Bell clanged down the corridor.

Sally June's ankle healed quickly. Old Dame Nature saw to that. She knew her business. By the end of the week Sally June had



## *April and Sally June*

entirely ceased to be an interesting invalid. She no longer held classes in state on the porch overlooking the rose garden where song of white throat and flash of oriole gold lent new meaning to

“ Hail to thee, blithe spirit,  
Bird thou never wert,”

and to the Ode to the Nightingale.

Sally June was back at the dingy old desk on the second floor of the Recitation Building, shut in by four drab colored walls and dusty windows.

It was a bit like life, Sally June thought, this switching back from the rose garden to the drab colored walls. Romance, Adventure, Glamour, were, perhaps, “ too costly for every day wear.” The workaday world was maybe essential as a background, a contrast. Possibly Romance would fail to be Romance if it were on the spot every minute. Sally June was a very philosophical young person with a very level head.

But in spite of her level-headedness there

## *April and Sally June*

were moments when she fell to dreaming a little, and remembering things which perhaps she might better have forgotten. She neither saw nor heard anything from Douglas Kincaid all the week. If he rode thundering through town on his black horse, Sally June did not see him. If he too, like Sally June dwelt now and then happily upon the memory of the enchanted evening he made no sign thereof. It was as if the thing had never happened — in some ways. In others, it was the most important thing that ever had happened since time began, though Sally June did not let herself admit that very often.

If she saw nothing of Douglas Kincaid she saw more than ever of Arthur Parkes. Arthur came every night to the school, either to call on Sally June in the big, dull parlor or to take her riding in his small car out over the moonlit roads into the country. Sally June was very nice to Arthur. She was grateful for his kindness, his fineness, his devotion. She was grateful to him for filling in so much of her time that she did not have so much left

## *April and Sally June*

over to think in. She was rather afraid of thinking these days.

And Arthur sunned himself in her favor and basked in a Fool's Paradise. He sensed something different in Sally June and believed, not unnaturally that she was "waking up" as he called it, and knowing nothing of the most important details of that adventure of Sally June's he dared to hope harder than ever that Sally June was "waking up" for him. Poor Arthur!

Finally Sunday came and Sally June this time decorously set out alone on the street car to pay the deferred visit to Miss Serena. By this time she had quite made up her mind to forget Douglas Kincaid as speedily as possible. If he chose to believe her a silly little flirt, or a still sillier prude, she couldn't help it. If she never saw him again she couldn't help that either. It was probably all for the best. No doubt he was just as horrid as Cameronville believed him. And anyway if he had really liked her as much as he pretended wouldn't he have sent her just one wee little

## *April and Sally June*

word all that week? The thing was done. Like other enchantments it had run its course and come to an end.

Whether Sally June believed her own arguments or not, it is not our business to inquire. Suffice it to say that, when she walked up the verbenas and heliotrope bordered path, to Miss Serena Pringle's vine covered porch and saw, not only Miss Serena herself, wearing lilac silk and a most beatific expression, but also a tall figure in gray tweeds, sitting very close beside his hostess and appearing right well at home, she wasn't the least little bit surprised though she was distinctly happy. It was as if her heart had known all the time that something like this was bound to happen. Did she turn and run straightway from temptation and the tea cups? No. She marched bravely and gaily past the verbenas and heliotrope toward the tea cups and the light of unmistakable pleasure in Douglas Kincaid's eyes. Let Fate have her way, so Sally June would have said, had you asked her. She had done her darndest to be good. She was not to be held

accountable for what had happened. “ Lord knows I asked for fish!— ” as the Irishman said, on being told by the waiter that there was neither whale nor shark on the menu that Friday.

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## Chapter V

SALLY JUNE, dear child, I'm so glad to see you." And Miss Serena Pringle set down her pink sprigged tea pot hastily to extend a tiny, exquisite blue veined hand to greet the newest arrived guest while her other guest, rising, deposited his tea cup and cake on the balustrade and stood looking down at Sally June with the quizzical smile in his eyes. Sally June was smiling too, having for the moment clean forgotten all the croakings of the ravens.

"So nice you happened to come today, dearie," purred the little lady in lilac happily. "I did so want you two to meet. Douglas, this is Sally June — Sally June Fenton, whose father was one of my dearest friends. And, Sally June, this is Douglas Kincaid. His mother and I went to school together and I am very, very fond of him."

"I told you so," sang Sally June's heart.



## *April and Sally June*

“ She wouldn’t have that ‘ Bless-you-my-children ’ look if he weren’t nice — just as nice as we know he is.”

Douglas Kincaid had taken Sally June’s right hand in his.

“ I told you so.” Oddly his words echoed the song in her heart. “ I knew there was bound to come a lucky day some time if I hoped hard enough. And here it is, sooner than I dared believe possible. I know your Sally June, Miss Serena, ma’am. Only she is my Mademoiselle April. I found her in the buttercups and then she was whisked away from me to the castle kept by the ogre and I didn’t know when I should ever see her again. But here she is, right on your front porch. Who says we’re not to believe in fairies? ”

“ Found her in the buttercups! ” Miss Serena’s eyes were very wide. “ Whatever are you talking about, Douglas? ”

“ About fairies. Do sit here, Miss Sally-April-June — but — not — November. Miss Serena will feed you and I will spin her a tale of — well, we’ll call it white magic. Shall I? ”

## *April and Sally June*

“Do. And spin it very nicely as becomes your profession.” Sally June smiled back at him. “Dear Miss Serena, is that Lady Baltimore that I behold? What if I hadn’t come? What if Mr. Kincaid had eaten all the cake before I got here! Talk about luck.”

“I might have. I’m awfully partial to her ladyship. You arrived none too soon to claim your thirds. Or is it only widows that are allowed that much? Maybe little girls like you get only a tithe. But any way, tithe or third, before you take a nibble, tell me how is your ankle. The ogre never mentioned it in her epistle. Really, I’ve worried about it a lot though you mightn’t have thought it.”

“Did you? The ankle is quite all right, thanks. As good as new. I was sorry not to write and thank you but I—” Sally June broke off with a little rush of rose color in her cheeks under the golden tan. “I couldn’t,” she finished a little lamely.

“I know. Ogres make things difficult. Yes, Miss Serena, ma’am. You are going to

get your story this minute. I'm simply bursting to tell it."

Miss Serena handed Sally June her tea cup and a plate with a large slice of Lady Baltimore on it. She had no idea what these two were talking about but she loved the foolery. It warmed her heart to have Douglas so like his old self. He hadn't been like that last week. He seemed so much happier. Miss Serena, who loved him, was happy, too, feeling it, and smiled at him expectantly, waiting for the promised tale.

Leaning against the pillar, taking a puff now and then at a cigarette he told it, with a light and whimsical touch. Of course, he didn't tell quite everything. There were a few things too delicate even for Miss Serena's sweet, old ears, though she heard more, oh, a great deal more than Miss Bainbridge had been vouchsafed. The little lady listened almost breathlessly, her cheeks getting pinker and pinker and her violet eyes bigger all the time. To her, too, Romance was a splendid, starry thing though it had passed her by long

## *April and Sally June*

ago when Sally June's young father gave his heart to a dark eyed Spanish girl.

"Dear me! Sally June! Wasn't it the luckiest thing he came along! Why, you might have had to stay there all night."

"I might have had to stay there till the robins covered me up with leaves," dimpled Sally June. "Isn't it a pathetic picture? Please, may I have another cup of tea? I'm quite overcome with pity for myself, just fancying all the sad things that might have happened to me if Mr. Kincaid and Jerry hadn't happened along when they did."

Sally June's eyes were dancing. After all since she was not permitted to be good, she might as well enjoy being wicked — by necessity.

Miss Serena poured the second cup of tea, added cream and sugar and sat stirring the product absent-mindedly, with a very thin, old silver spoon.

"It was certainly most fortunate," she agreed. "But what I can't quite see is why you couldn't take her back to the school in the

## *April and Sally June*

little car if the big one was disabled, the one you drove last Sunday morning when you came to see me. Here is your tea, dearie. Are you ready for more cake?"

Sally June shook her head and set down the tea cup on the arm of her chair rather hastily. Her eyes no longer danced. So he had had another car all the time. He could have sent her back immediately. He hadn't been honest about it. He had kept her there an hour, under his roof, on purpose to — to amuse himself. Miss Bainbridge had been right. She raised her eyes and met Douglas Kincaid's.

"I know. It is true. But please," his implored, "don't give me away before her."

Sally June lowered her eyes again, fell to stirring the already well stirred cup of tea.

Douglas Kincaid threw away the end of his cigarette which landed in a bed of purple and gold pansies.

"Now, Miss Serena, ma'am, is that fair?" he demanded. "Trust a Mademoiselle April whom the fairies had given over to my care to that vile, bottle green bug of a racer that al-

## *April and Sally June*

ways breaks down just when it shouldn't and has the very devil of a temper if it's taken out at the wrong time! Unthinkable! Besides the buttercup person was desperately hungry. I had to feed her, didn't I?"

"Of course. I quite forgot. The poor child had had no tea. And no doubt the rest was the very thing for her when she was suffering so from her poor foot. You were quite right, my dear. It was far better to keep her safe with you until the other car was ready. Isn't the Pines a lovely place, Sally June?"

"Very," said Sally June briefly.

Miss Serena's delicately tuned ear caught something amiss in the tone. That cool little "very" did not sound like Sally June who was usually abrim with enthusiasm about everything.

"Does your ankle pain you, dear? Shan't Douglas get you a stool?" she inquired anxiously.

But Sally June promptly disclaimed both an ache and a desire for a stool and turned the conversation away from herself to a book she



## *April and Sally June*

had brought to her hostess, one of the weekly offerings of the devoted Professor Parkes as it happened. The mention of the Professor set Miss Serena off on a new tack.

“ And how is Professor Parkes? Such a nice young man! You should know him, Douglas. Wonderfully well informed. Knows all about Greek and Latin poetry and things like that. Fancy! By the way somebody said that he was going to marry the President’s daughter, the pretty one. Estelle, is that her name? ”

Did Sally June think there was anything to the rumor?

Sally June did not think there was anything to it. And added, against her will and quite without knowing why she did such a horrid thing, that there couldn’t be very much to it, could there? Since Arthur was perpetually proposing to her — Sally June. He couldn’t very well want to marry both her and Estelle, could he?

Her hostess was set all athrill at this piece of news. Dear me! Dear me! She might

## *April and Sally June*

have known. Professor Parkes was so devoted to dear Sally June! Such a nice young man! Born in Atlanta, too, wasn't he? And so well thought of by every one! Well, Well! And was Sally June dear, really going to marry him?

Sally June, dear, already desperately ashamed of herself and wishing with all her heart she could take back her hateful, impulsive confession, replied with considerable heat that she was most decidedly not going to marry Arthur Parkes or anybody else. And then again, she changed the subject, more successfully this time, to the May Day pageant, to be given in the garden at Hannah Barr. Guilelessly, Miss Serena let herself be diverted.

But the light mood, the grace of the earlier part of the afternoon was gone past recovery. Sally June talked, Miss Serena talked, occasionally Douglas Kincaid put in a word or two. But something had disappeared, some rapport that had existed between the three had been subtly destroyed. It was as if a frost

had overtaken a flower just in its blooming. There was no more mention of fairies or Mademoiselle Aprils. Sally June was not even Sally June when Douglas Kincaid addressed her. She was most properly Miss Fenton.

Presently Sally June rose to go though she had arranged to be excused from attendance at Vespers. Douglas Kincaid rose too, remarking that he would walk over with her across the field to the car line. Sally June replied very politely and very icily that it wasn't at all necessary to take him out of his way. He must not trouble. And Douglas returned very firmly that it was no trouble at all and looked so very determined to have his way that Sally June did not see any use in argument. And the two, having bidden their hostess an affectionate good-by, departed together in complete silence.

Miss Serena looked after them, trouble and perplexity in her eyes. Now whatever was the matter with Sally June? Had they already filled her ears with old tales better forgotten? It must be that and yet — No. She had been

## *April and Sally June*

as friendly as possible at first, looked happy as anything to find Douglas there on the porch, chattered with him as gaily as a little bird. What had happened? Miss Serena had no idea that she herself had dropped the fly in the ointment, or at least, called Sally June's attention to the presence of the insect.

The moment they were out of sight and hearing, Douglas stopped short in the path.

“ See here, Miss Sally June,” he said. “ I plead guilty. I could have sent you home in the racer. I admit it. But the darned thing is tricky and not at all comfortable for a lady with an injured foot. That much I stand on. But chiefly, I fear, it wasn't the limitations of the car that prevented my placing it at your disposal. Chiefly, I was plain, doggone lonesome. I had been working away by myself for days on the play, scarcely spoken to anyone but the servants. And then you came and, well — I couldn't bear to let you go instantly. I wanted to keep you — for an hour. Tell me, Sally June, did it do any harm, to you or Han-

nah Barr or Mrs. Grundy or anybody? Tell me that and tell me too, am I utterly not to be forgiven for that one little piece of deception? Which I confess to freely—now that I'm caught," he added, with a little laugh at his own expense, though his eyes were sober enough, sober and tired looking, utterly weary.

Suddenly Sally June felt immensely sorry for him, believed in him absolutely again. After all, wasn't he right? What harm had it done? Let her be honest too. Had she not been only too happy to believe that she had to stay an hour with him beneath his roof? Had the hour not been the happiest, the rarest, she had ever known?

She looked up and met his steady eyes, fixed upon her.

"Well?" he asked.

"Of course, you are forgiven. I would have been awfully sorry myself to have missed that hour, though I would not have known how much I missed. And you were so good to me and I've been so ashamed not to be able to

## *April and Sally June*

write you — to tell you — ” She broke off abruptly.

“ Of course. I told you I understood all that. Ogres must behave ogreishly. It is their nature to. Miss Bainbridge conveyed your thanks with her own, most — most adequately. She also conveyed between the lines something that sounded rather like an ultimatum. That was why I didn’t telephone or write myself. I didn’t even dare send you flowers though I wanted to tremendously. I’d never want to be the cause of any hurt, even the smallest to you, Sally June. You know that, don’t you, — Mademoiselle April? ”

Sally June admitted that she did.

“ But it is cruel — unfair,” she added impulsively. “ There is something that I don’t understand. You — you aren’t what they say you are at all.”

“ Am I not? One never can tell, Sally June. One never knows what one might do — under provocation. For instance, if you were really engaged to marry your admirable Professor Parkes, I am quite positive that I would do my



## *April and Sally June*

best to get you away from him, by fair means or foul, because — well, I think you know why, little Miss April.”

Sally June did not answer. But her cheeks flamed and her heart sang for joy. Did he really mean it? Did he care too? Did she dare admit to herself that this was love, come suddenly, without warning, out of April, just as bluebirds came, unheralded, happy, singing?

But whether caution overtook him or for some other reason, “Master Douglas” did not press the point just then. Instead he drew Sally June’s hand in his and started walking toward the car line.

“But since we have your word for it that you are not, at the moment, at least, engaged to Professor Parkes, there is no immediate necessity for rushing to desperate deeds. Is that right, Miss April?” he challenged half teasing, half in earnest.

Sally June firmly withdrew her hand.

“Quite,” she agreed promptly, rosy but composed. Sally June did not wear her heart

## *April and Sally June*

on her sleeve. "I am ashamed that I mentioned Arthur. It was horrid of me, shockingly poor taste, and unkind to poor Arthur, who really is a dear. I don't know why I ever did it."

"I do. You wanted to punish me quickly and ferociously. You did it too. I could cheerfully have murdered your dear Arthur that very minute."

Sally June laughed a little at that. Then she gave a startled exclamation.

"Lawsy me!" she groaned. "I am an idiot. That's the car coming. I'll never be able to make it. There's not another for an hour. I'd better go back to Miss Serena's."

"Must you? I'm sure she has gone to take a nap. It would be a pity to disturb her. What is more, do you think it is quite kind to leave me when you've only just begun to be nice to me again?"

Sally June considered quickly. If she yielded to this delightful suggestion, she couldn't solace her conscience by calling it sin perforce. She would be deliberately electing

## *April and Sally June*

wickedness, outraging Miss Bainbridge's most cherished proprieties. But Miss Bainbridge and her august mandates seemed afar off from the sweet smelling, sunny meadow. Sally June chose to forget their very existence.

"We might walk a little way toward town," she compromised. "Along the road, so as not to miss the next car when it comes along."

"Right O! Are you sure your ankle will stand it though? We mustn't take any chances with that."

"If it gets tired we'll stop. That's easy," decided Sally June.

Indeed, it did seem easy. Everything seemed easy. For the moment one wondered why anything ever seemed complicated or difficult. Sally June and the young person whose pillow had been wet with tears, no later than Monday last, were two distinct entities, having naught to do with each other.

As it happened it was not of themselves that Sally June and her companion fell to talking. It was of Miss Serena and her rare,

## *April and Sally June*

sweet character and person. It seemed very natural that they should both love her, that she should mean so much in both their lives.

“She and my mother were very close friends,” Douglas told her. “She knew your father too, it seems. That wasn’t in Cameronville, was it? I don’t remember any Fentons here.”

“No. It wasn’t in Cameronville. She stayed with an aunt of hers in the town my father lived in. She — they were engaged to be married once.”

“Yes?” Douglas looked at her musingly, as if trying to piece together some old story. “I seemed to recall something about it. Your father married somebody else — somebody very beautiful. What was she? A singer — artist? Something different. Not, not primarily Georgian and orthodox.” He smiled a little as he added the last.

Sally June smiled too and shook her head.

“Far, far from Georgia and orthodoxy. Born in Seville and an actress.”

“Oh.” Again Douglas Kincaid looked

## *April and Sally June*

down at his companion. "That accounts for you, Mademoiselle April."

"For me? But I'm not a bit Spanish looking. I used to cry because I was fair. I wanted to have hair black as night and great, deep, velvety black eyes, like hers. I look like the Fentons, more's the pity."

"Taking it by and large, what you look like isn't so bad, Sally June. I'm not disposed to be too sympathetic on that score. But I didn't mean accounting for your looks. I meant accounting for you. You are not precisely orthodox yourself, little lady. I saw something pagan dancing in your eyes that Sunday morning. It was why I looked again. Pan and John Knox, Sally June. What a combination!"

Sally June laughed. How wonderfully he understood. Pan and John Knox. He was right. The two of them were in her blood. And it was the Pan who loved — But here Sally June snipped off the thread of her thoughts. Go soft. Nobody asked you for your love.

## *April and Sally June*

“ I wonder what you heard about my father and Miss Serena,” she said. “ I’d hate to have you misunderstand. It was Miss Serena who gave him up. He would have married her. Dolores sent him back to do it. But Miss Serena knew something was different, that he didn’t really love her, never really had loved her, just drifted into an engagement, because they were thrown so much together and it was so suitable, she a minister’s daughter and all. She made him tell her what had happened, how he met Dolores in Paris and how they loved each other, from the very first, though they meant never to tell any one, to play fair with Miss Serena, back home. And then she sent him back — to Dolores. Wasn’t it wonderful of her? ” Sally June’s eyes shone starrily. That old story of old loves and heart-breaks and gallant surrenders always moved her deeply.

“ Very wonderful,” he agreed. “ Good for Miss Serena! I’m glad you told me that story, Sally June. I’ve heard it garbled and warped the way stories get. She’s a braver little lady



## *April and Sally June*

even than I knew. For she loved your father. Make no mistake about that."

"I don't," said Sally June. "She loved him tremendously — enough to want his happiness more than her own. Sometimes I wonder if I — if I loved a person, whether I would be big enough to behave like that."

"Don't bother to wonder, Sally June. Life sets us enough first hand problems. We don't have to invent them. I hope for your sake, you'll never have to decide — between happinesses. It's a difficult job." His tone was grave. It was as if this story of Sally June's had stirred some sleeping memories of his own awake. "'Tis an awkward thing to play with souls and matter enough to save one's own,'" he quoted. "Was the sacrifice justified, Sally June? Were your father and mother very happy together?"

"Yes and no. They loved each other devotedly, but they weren't always happy I think. Miss Serena would have given Dad a more, well, — a more serene life. Like her name. My mother was always scandalizing the parish

## *April and Sally June*

by doing crazy, impulsive things. They didn't understand. They didn't think a minister's wife ought to be beautiful and to wear beautiful clothes and love high heeled slippers and Oriental perfume, to dance and sing snatches of opera and run barefoot in the dew in the early morning. She horrified them and kept poor Dad constantly in hot water. He never blamed her. He always understood. But she did complicate things for him a good deal, I am afraid. She died when I was only five so I don't know much about it except by hearsay but I can imagine."

"So can I," he said. "Still I fancy your father thought it was worth it, complications and all."

"Oh, I am sure he did," agreed Sally June eagerly. "He worshipped her. Could hardly bear to speak of her after she died. Queer but it was mostly from Miss Serena, since I've been here in Cameronville that I've learned to know really what she was like. My aunt was so prejudiced against her she was always holding her up to me as a frightful example of what not to

## *April and Sally June*

do. Miss Serena told me how beautiful she was, not only physically beautiful but beautiful in spirit. She was a great actress, would have been one of the greatest in the world, some people think, had she not given it all up for Dad and—for me. Sometimes I think she would not have died so young if she had kept to the work she loved. She stifled it for my father's sake and it killed something in her which cried out to live. It was like extinguishing a flame, a fire that God meant to burn. It wasn't for only my father that love made life hard. Sometimes it seems to me that love is—a terrible thing."

"You are right, Sally June. Sometimes love is a terrible thing. And a strange thing. Sometimes it is taken away from us and we feel as if we had lost everything. And yet later we learn—to thank God for snatching it from us." He spoke rather to himself than to her, as if he were following out some train of thought to its logical conclusion.

Sally June caught her breath. Was he speaking of Dolly Morrisson? Had he felt as

## *April and Sally June*

if he had lost everything losing her? A little fire of quick jealousy spurted up in her, an emotion utterly new and strange and hateful. Then she recalled the rest of his speech. To learn to thank God for having love snatched from one! Poor Dolly! And who knew? Perhaps she had loved this man and it was having to give him up that had made her what she was today. Always there seemed something twisted in Dolly. Perhaps that was the clue to the twist.

“It is all very — complicated,” she summed up aloud. “I think my ankle is getting tired.”

It was. And Sally June herself was tired. Life suddenly seemed a rather unwieldly and badly packed bundle which weighed her down heavily.

They sat down on the grassy slope beside the road to wait for the car which would soon be due and the talk was no longer of love and such vital affairs but of light things which didn't matter but which kept one from thinking too deeply or too much.

## *April and Sally June*

Once or twice Sally June wondered what would happen if somebody passed who knew her, somebody who would carry tales back to Hannah or to H. G. Hartley who was no doubt biding his time to punish her for not liking his amorous advances. But nobody did pass. The gods were evidently on her side, knowing that she had really meant to be good although she hadn't been able to keep it up.

Presently the trolley came lumbering along out of the dusk and Sally June and Douglas Kincaid said goodbye to each other with a hand shake and a smile exchanged. The car rumbled off townward. Sally June found her purse and paid her fare and settled down for a quiet half hour's journey which she was rather grateful for. She needed it, to think things over, to try to discover, if she could, where she was going.

But even as she settled down to her thoughts she was aware that a woman in the seat opposite her was staring at her rather intently, a woman wearing a large and exceedingly unbecoming hat of magenta hue. The hat looked

## *April and Sally June*

oddly familiar to Sally June though she was sure that the woman under it was no one she knew to speak to. It bothered her all the way in to town, trying to place the hat. The thing seemed to obstruct her thoughts. She could not get around it. It was exasperating.

That night as she stood brushing out her hair preparatory to getting into bed she asked Hallie Gerrard who had drifted in for a chat, as was her fashion, if she remembered a magenta hat, a most hideous magenta hat and who wore it.

“Magenta hat!” mused Hallie. “Yes, I do remember one, seems to me—a frightful affair. Oh, I know. It belongs to that Mrs. Tenney, old H. G. Hartley’s daughter-in-law, the one that sits in the side pew in the Baptist church and smirks when she sings. Awful taste! That woman! Had a mustard colored suit last winter. Made me bilious just to look at it. Why are you interested in her hat? Want one like it?”

Sally June shuddered.



## *April and Sally June*

“Heaven forbid! I just wondered who she was, that’s all. She was on the trolley tonight coming back to town.”

“Trolley? Oh, you went out to Miss Prin-  
gle’s. Have a good time?”

“Very,” said Sally June absently.

Hallie uncurled herself from the window seat and yawned.

“Guess I’ll go to bed. It’s hot tonight, isn’t it? Seems almost as if there might be going to be a thunder storm.”

“Almost,” said Sally June soberly.

But after all the thunder storm did not come. Neither, as the days flew by, did Sally June hear anything disastrous as the result of that meeting with the magenta hat with H. G. Hartley’s daughter-in-law under it. And so Sally June fashion, she ceased to worry about the matter. She had other things on her mind.

In the first place she borrowed a copy of one of Douglas Kincaid’s books from Miss Serena, a tale of old Louisiana before the war, which delighted her. If his plays were half

## *April and Sally June*

as good as his books, she thought they must be very good indeed.

By Friday she had mustered courage to go to the public library and ask for more of his books. There were two others she knew and Miss Serena unluckily did not possess them. She rather hoped it would not be Miss Browne who would be behind the desk that evening. She remembered that it was Miss Browne who had first poured into her unwilling ears the gossip about Douglas Kincaid and the "actress woman" which Sally June did not want to believe and yet could not quite disbelieve.

But luck was against her. Miss Browne herself was in charge tonight, looking quite the same color as her name in a peculiarly ugly snuff colored gown. She had rather a snuff colored mind Sally June decided privately in passing. No wonder she selected that shade for her dresses.

On being asked in a carefully careless tone if there happened to be any books by Douglas Kincaid in the library, the person in snuff

## *April and Sally June*

color drew herself up rather stiffly and replied that there were none. She held herself responsible for the books on her shelves and so long as she was librarian no volume written by Douglas Kincaid would be found there.

Sally June's eyebrows lifted. She felt argumentative. Snuff color affected her that way.

"But why shouldn't you have them?" she demanded. "There's nothing wrong with his books, is there? I read one — 'Rose of Orleans.' It was a splendid book — tremendously interesting."

Miss Browne sniffed.

"Interesting! Perhaps. But a bad man cannot write good books. And Douglas Kincaid is a bad man."

Sally June longed to give the lady the contradiction categorical and as rudely as possible. But one may not always obey one's impulses — even in April.

Instead she felt obliged to take recourse in abstract discussion.

## *April and Sally June*

“But, Miss Browne, you have Shelley and Burns and Byron and Poe and De Maupausant on your shelves. And I judge they were none of them very good by an orthodox interpretation of the word. But their writings are wonderful. And Shakespeare! There was the Dark Lady. You can’t get away from her. At least Shakespeare couldn’t,” she added rather wickedly.

“My dear! That has nothing to do with it.” Miss Browne spoke in rather a horrified tone. “Shakespeare and Shelley and the rest are classics. We don’t look into their lives.”

“Don’t we? I do,” objected Sally June stoutly. “You can’t understand what they wrote if you don’t. They wouldn’t have written so wonderfully if they hadn’t—well,—lived. I don’t mean I think every writer has to be a sinner before he’s a writer. That would be a terrible doctrine. I am sure Burns and Poe, for instance, paid terribly for all their sins and weaknesses. But they were big enough to turn even dross to gold in the end. And for my part, I don’t believe Shelley’s

## *April and Sally June*

Skylark or his Adonais could have been more beautiful or true if he had been a white saint.

‘ Life like a dome of many colored glass  
Stains the white radiance of eternity ’ ”

The quotation again rose to Sally June’s mind as it had that morning in church. “ Life was many colored to him. It must be to all geniuses. That’s why they are geniuses.”

Miss Browne shook her head sternly at that. As a matter of fact Sally June had dragged her into too deep waters. She had never read the Adonais and hadn’t the slightest idea what the young woman was driving at. Still she felt certain on general principles that rank heresies were being uttered and should be summarily frowned down.

“ I am sure you are quite wrong, Miss Fenton, and I do hope you are not teaching this shocking kind of thing to the young ladies in the Institute. It would be most unsuitable. As for Douglas Kincaid’s books, I am very glad we have none here. I should be sorry to be responsible for having permitted you to

## *April and Sally June*

read them. I would advise that instead you read one of William's — the Reverend Morrisson's. His works are bound to be more edifying."

As she spoke, the librarian lifted a little limp leather bound book which lay on the desk near her hand. "Some Interpretations of Saint Paul." Privately printed.

Sally June eyed the volume with some scorn. Privately printed, indeed, and on the most exquisite paper. Of course. Why not, when one's wife paid all the bills?

"No thanks," she dismissed the proffered Interpretations decisively. "I don't care much for the Reverend Morrisson's effusions. He never says anything in the least original, does he?"

"Original! My dear!" Miss Browne was shocked. "How can one be original about the gospels? It would be — almost sacrilegious, don't you think?"

"Very likely," murmured Sally June exhausted, moving aside to make way for another seeker of literature. "I think I'll not



## *April and Sally June*

take a book after all, Miss Browne. Good night."

Bookless, Sally June strolled back to the school, a little frown on her forehead, a little perplexity, perhaps more than a little in her heart.

She had made as gallant a defence as she knew how of her geniuses, men whose works did not always square with their great words. But the effort had left her somehow dispirited and weary, not at all in the mood of the dreaming April night.

After all, if Douglas Kincaid's books were as different from his life as Shelley's *Adonais* was, for instance, different from the Shelley of biographies, perhaps Miss Browne was right. One might better not read them. Certainly one might better not see too much of the writer, even aside from the Hannah Barr mandates. No, Sally June would see Douglas Kincaid no more.

But looking suddenly skyward Sally June saw the moon and the moon seemed to laugh.



## *Chapter VI*

**M**ISS SALLY JUNE, please, Miss Bainbridge wants to see you right away. She says it's awfully important." Minna delivered her message a little breathlessly, having run all the way up the stairs to Miss Sally June's room and before breakfast at that.

"All right, Minna, thank you." Sally June's answer was composed enough. But her heart flopped down, down like lead inside her. What, oh, what could Miss Bainbridge possibly have to say to her at this hour, what so "awfully important" that she had to be sent for at seven thirty on a Saturday morning? Had the magenta hat got in its dirty work at last? Sally June was mortally afraid so and like most of us sinners, when we seem in danger of being found out, asked herself rather miserably why, oh why, she had ever let herself get into such a trap?

## *April and Sally June*

But presenting herself at the office, she discovered that what she feared hadn't descended upon her. Miss Bainbridge's summons had had a very different import. It seemed Miss Serena Pringle was very ill with a severe heart attack and had asked that Sally June be allowed to come as speedily as possible to her.

Miss Pringle, for all she lived so modestly in the little vined cottage, was distinctly "Best People." Miss Bainbridge saw no reason for refusing a favor asked by her and suggested that Miss Fenton go immediately after breakfast, being excused from all school obligations for the week end.

But Sally June did not wait for breakfast. Indeed, she forgot she had had none as she hastily flung a few articles into her over night bag and flew off to catch the trolley, her heart heavy for dear Miss Serena. Sally June knew how serious these attacks were and that one day there would be no more of them. Miss Serena would drift off to that other world which often seemed far nearer to her than this

## *April and Sally June*

one, and where so many people she had loved awaited her, as she in her clear faith never doubted. Sally June couldn't bear to think of that day, always fear clutching at her heart when Miss Serena felt ill. Miss Serena was the only link left to Sally June with Dear Dad, seemed always so much closer to him than Aunt Luella. As the trolley rattled along she wished she knew better how to pray, tried hard to do it as well as she knew how. She wished the trolley would go faster. It was terrible to be so sick and all alone except for servants.

But as it turned out Miss Serena was not alone. Douglas Kincaid had been sent for in the night and had come flying in mad haste in the bottle green racer, had fled again and brought back the doctor, at a speed which it was well no traffic officer beheld. And the doctor had come none too soon, it seemed. The need for him had been dire. Thanks to "Master Douglas" Miss Serena had not drifted off, though she had very nearly done so. When Sally June arrived she was sleeping quietly, the white clad nurse in attendance.

## *April and Sally June*

The worst was over. All this Sally June learned from Hester, Miss Serena's personal maid, a dark eyed, soft voiced mulatto girl, who adored her mistress.

"I don't know what we ever would have done if it hadn't been for Mr. Kincaid, Miss Sally June," Hester had added. "He seems to think of everything. He is wonderful."

Sally June nodded. She too, thought Douglas Kincaid rather "wonderful." Dear Miss Serena! What if Douglas hadn't been there! What if— But Sally June had no time for further surmises. She heard a step in the hall and turning saw Douglas standing close beside her. They shook hands. Sally June tried to tell him something of her gratitude, her relief that he had been available, had been able to do so much.

"I'd do a lot more than that for Miss Serena," he answered. "I love her very much."

"So do I," sighed Sally June. "I was so worried about her. I couldn't wait to get here."

He looked at her rather sharply. Sally

## *April and Sally June*

June suddenly realized that she felt a little queer and dizzy. She sat down in the nearest convenient chair.

“ And you had no breakfast ? ”

Sally June shook her head.

“ I thought as much. I say, Hester,” he called.

The mulatto girl was at his side in an instant, all eagerness to do his bidding, worshipful because of what he had done for her beloved mistress.

“ Miss Sally June has had no breakfast either. How about having it in the garden ? May we ? ”

“ Of course, you may, Mr. Douglas. I’ll set the table this minute. Myra has everything ready. I’ll tell her to fry some more bacon.”

“ Do,” approved Mr. Douglas. “ All right, little lady. We’ll soon have some food into you. A three quarter of an hour journey on the Cameronville trolley and no breakfast inside is enough to make any one feel rocky.”

“ Oh, I’m so ashamed,” groaned Sally June. “ I haven’t any business to be upset. It is you



## *April and Sally June*

that have had all the worry and been up half the night.”

He smiled at that.

“That’s nothing. I’m up half the night, half the time, when the writing imps get hold of me. Besides I’m strong as an ox. Shall we go out? I rather fancy everything is ready.”

Sally June rose but hesitated a minute.

“Oughtn’t I to go up to Miss Serena? Honestly, I feel all right now. I was just spinny for a minute, that’s all.”

“Nothing you can do, little lady. The doctor gave her an opiate. She won’t wake for hours. Better take breakfast while it’s going.”

And Sally June acquiesced. It was a very quiet meal in the shady back garden, at the table set in the shade of a great magnolia tree. There were flowers all around them and flash and flutter of wings, bird song and sunshine. It seemed oddly natural to Sally June that the two of them should be there together eating breakfast. Hannah Barr seemed the span of a world away. It was as if it did not exist.

## *April and Sally June*

The only realities were of this little world which shut them in, the soft tongued child of the love of a white father and a black mother, who served them, Douglas Kincaid, grave and kind and solicitous of her well being, little, frail Miss Serena, lying so still upstairs in the west chamber, herself, Sally June Fenton, queerly, quietly happy for all her anxiety. These were real. The rest seemed but shadows.

They spoke of Miss Serena over their coffee, of her courage, her faith, her goodness.

“ I used sometimes to think I hated goodness,” Sally June confessed. “ Aunt Luella made it such a smug, hateful, holier-than-thou, sort of thing, with no light or laughter in it. It wasn’t till I knew Miss Serena that I realized how — how really beautiful sheer goodness is, shining and brave, like a star.”

“ You are right, Sally June. Real goodness — not the spurious imitation of it — is beautiful. I have a tremendous admiration for it.”

Sally June absently crumbled her roll and watched a blue bird at work in the nest that

was abuilding in the fence post. But she did not know she was crumbling the roll and did not really see the blue bird. She was suddenly hearing little Miss Browne's flat tones pronouncing an edict. "A bad man cannot write good books. And Douglas Kincaid is a bad man."

Lies! Lies! Hadn't he just declared with manifest sincerity his admiration for goodness? Could he be what they said he was and admire goodness? And then Sally June remembered Burns, the very poet she had cited to Miss Browne. Did ever human being possess a more passionate admiration for goodness, live up to it less? Were men like that? And this man opposite her, with his fine, tired eyes, his face, a little sad, in repose, was he like that too, or had he been like that before some hot fires within him had burned themselves out? Suppose he were "good" now but had not always been so, could one forgive the past, treat it as if it had not been? Sally June did not know. She seemed so often these days to be wandering in a mist, losing her

## *April and Sally June*

way even among familiar things. If only Dear Dad were alive! But even more, this morning, Sally June wanted the mother whom she scarcely remembered. Even Miss Serena was so ill, dying maybe. Sally June felt suddenly very much alone in her mist, though the April world was gold with sun and Douglas Kincaid was so near she could have put out her hand and touched his, in just a flash of time.

Later she knelt in the cool, shaded west chamber beside Miss Serena's bed. The delicate, waxen little face, framed in its silver hair, was very peaceful. Last night's suffering had been magically erased by deep, dreamless sleep. Miss Serena lay so still it frightened Sally June. Was this death, this terrible serenity and quiet? Frightened, she bent lower over the still form. No. There was a faintly perceptible rise and fall of the bosom under the white coverlid. It wasn't death, but something very like it, certainly not life. Wasn't she coming back? Didn't she want to? Was she — Sally June — going

to be left utterly alone? She felt as if she could not bear it. Not — not now.

“ Miss Serena, don’t leave me. Don’t die. I need you so.”

It wasn’t Sally June’s lips that uttered the heart breaking cry. It was her spirit. Perhaps Miss Serena’s spirit, hovering on the borderland between the two worlds heard and heeded, came back to Sally June who needed her. How could Serena Pringle fail Philip Fenton’s daughter? Never once had she failed Philip himself. Long ago she had given up love for his sake. Today, perhaps, for the sake of Sally June, she had given up something she wanted even more.

The pale lids fluttered, lifted slowly. Old lips smiled wanly at Sally June.

“ Sally June, dear! Did you call me? ” The words came faint but distinct.

Promptly the efficient nurse moved toward the bed.

“ Nobody spoke, Miss Pringle. You were dreaming,” she remarked in a soothing tone such as one might use to a child suddenly

## *April and Sally June*

awakened and thinking he had heard a queer noise.

Miss Serena did not contradict her. What was the use? One did not argue with a stiff, starched personage like that. But she smiled at Sally June and her eyes said, "We know better, don't we, Sally June, dear? You did call me and I came back."

It seemed she came back to stay too. The doctor arrived again at noon and pronounced his patient on the way to recovery. The danger was practically over. All that was needed now was quiet and good care.

"You needn't worry a mite, Miss Sally June. She's going to pull through fine," genial little Doctor Davison assured Sally June who had followed him downstairs to make sure everything was as right as he told Miss Serena up there in the west room. "Though I don't mind telling you at this stage her chances were pretty slim last night. If I hadn't got there when I did—" He broke off with an expressive gesture. "My car was out of whack when they called me and



## *April and Sally June*

I was burning up the wire trying to hire one when that green devil came whizzing into my yard, going sixty miles an hour." He grinned at Douglas Kincaid standing near.

"He means the car not me, Sally June," explained Douglas with a twinkle. "I may be a devil but I'm positively not green."

"Nor yellow," flashed the little doctor. "You see, Miss Sally June, I saw this chap in operation over there in France during the late unpleasantness. Why, I could tell you things he did that would make your hair stand on end."

"Pray, don't," smiled Douglas lighting a cigarette and offering his case to the other man. "Her hair looks so nice as it is."

Sally June said nothing. Privately she wished with all her heart that Doctor Davison had been permitted to go on with his hair raising tales. But Douglas being Douglas it was pretty clear that no such performance would be allowed. Still the little that had been said pleased her mightily. She had liked the little doctor's quick retort "Nor yellow"

## *April and Sally June*

spoken with such evident conviction. If Doctor Davison liked him and Miss Serena liked him, well, — there couldn't be any harm in Sally June Fenton's liking him either.

She had quite a lot to think of that afternoon as she sat beside Miss Serena while the latter drowsed off into fitful slumber or lay quiet and weak, but obviously happy to have Sally June near at hand.

Douglas went off home but promised to come back later in the afternoon to see if everything was going all right.

Miss Serena slept. The nurse tiptoed out of the room, going about her business. Sally June went over to the book case and picked out a book. *The Golden Treasury*. She sat down again by the bed, opened the book at random. It opened as by long wont to a certain page, the page of Burns' 'red, red rose' song. And indeed there were faded rose petals to mark the spot, placed there, no doubt, long ago by Miss Serena herself.

When had they found their way there? Sally June wondered. Was it when she be-

## *April and Sally June*

lieved her Philip all hers, or later when she knew that he was not hers at all, had never been? Sally June sighed. It was the third stanza that had faint pencilings to mark it, pencilings left long ago, probably too, by the same hand that had laid away the once red rose.

“Till a’ the seas gang dry, my dear,  
And the rocks melt wi’ the sun;  
I will luv thee still, my dear,  
While the sands of life shall run.”

Tears welled up into Sally June’s young eyes. Poor Miss Serena! She had loved like that, kept faith all these weary years. And now at last the sands of life were nearly run for her, too. What became of love then? Sally June, her hands clasped around her knees wondered as many and many a one has wondered before her, and seeking found no answer, except the futile, unsatisfying “Who knows?”

Softly she closed the book and walking over to the window stood looking out into the flower

## *April and Sally June*

filled garden. The blue birds were still flying hither and yon, terribly busy about their home building. Golden butterflies drifted about from posy to posy. The stately black cat Prospero sedately crossed the strip of emerald lawn and stretched himself at full length in the sun to the immense annoyance of a wren in the lilac bush who scolded him vigorously but to no effect. Everything out there so full of life. In here, age, very, very quiet and tired, getting ready to slip off some day into a sleep from which there need be no weary waking.

What was it all about? Why all this pother about getting born if one had to die so soon, sometimes without ever having very much lived? Some day Sally June too would be old and would go to sleep. Oh, God! — She prayed — let her live first, let life burn for her, a flame, leaping, iridescent, no little, pale candle flicker like Miss Serena's!

Sally June wanted life — a great deal of it — even if it hurt. Wanted love — a great deal of that too, even if it hurt, as she had begun to

## *April and Sally June*

realize it might. What did it matter if there was pain too? Better pain than frustration, stagnation. She wanted to drain the whole glass, while the sparkle was on the wine, while she was young, young, young.

The color surged into her cheeks then. For out of the quiet of the afternoon she heard the thunder of horse's hoofs. Jerry was coming, and Jerry's master. Every beat of the hoof beat in Sally June's heart. Asked or unasked, Sally June had given her love to Douglas Kincaid and she knew it.

Miss Serena seemed to hear Jerry's hoofs too or at any rate to sense the arrival of Jerry's master. She stirred and woke.

"Ask Douglas if he will come up," she said to Sally June. "He is so strong. I like to have him near me. He makes me feel strong too."

So Douglas came and the three sat rather quiet and very happy and content together for a few minutes. And then something happened.

There was the sound of an approaching car

## *April and Sally June*

and Hester came in presently to say that the Reverend Morrisson was downstairs and would like to see Miss Serena if she felt able to receive him.

Before she had hardly time to say whether she did or did not feel able, William Morrisson was in the room. Even before he spoke to Miss Serena, his eyes fell upon Douglas Kincaid who had risen and stood, the bed between him and the newcomer. Sally June had a queer feeling that she heard a metallic sound, like the clash of swords.

“ Oh! So you are here, Douglas? ” The silver note seemed to have gone out of the Reverend Morrisson’s voice, leaving it oddly flat and unmusical.

“ Yes, I am here, Bill. ” The Reverend Morrisson had made an abortive, and for him amazingly awkward gesture, extending a dubious hand. But Douglas Kincaid ignored the hand and it fell limp and unheeded at the Reverend Morrisson’s side. The Reverend Morrisson hastened to greet Miss Serena and lastly Sally June who had slipped as far



## *April and Sally June*

away as possible into the recess of the bay window.

Followed due inquiries as to the invalid's health, expressions of proper satisfaction at her evident improvement. Then a second of complete silence.

"I heard you were at The Pines," murmured the Reverend Morrisson perfunctorily to Douglas, still standing. "You should have looked us up, my dear fellow. It—it wasn't neighborly."

"Sorry. As a matter of fact I didn't come to The Pines to be—neighborly. I came because I had a lot of work to do and thought it would be a good place in which to do it." The speaker's tone was scrupulously polite but cool and colorless. Sally June had never heard "Master Douglas" speak like that. She had a feeling as if she were at a play but had come late and didn't know what it was all about.

"Work? Oh, yes. You write, of course."

"Yes," returned the other still colorlessly. "I write." Then as if he felt it incum-

## *April and Sally June*

bent upon him he added, "I hope Dolly is well."

"Quite, thanks. She would be — um — ah — glad if you would find time to come and see us."

"Do you think so?" There was faint irony in the uncompromising question.

"Of course. We both would. It is a great thing, isn't it Miss Serena, to have a famous brother? The least he can do is to come and see us occasionally, isn't it?"

Brother! Sally June's mind spun round like a top. These two! Brothers! Incredible!

Miss Serena lay back among her pillows, looking at the speaker with the cool detachment which often characterizes the sick.

"Famous!" she murmured. "I suppose Douglas is famous. I always seem to forget it. I just think of him as — himself — the kind of man I wish God had given me for a son."

The Reverend Morrisson coughed. It almost seemed as if he found this speech of Miss Serena's difficult to swallow.

## *April and Sally June*

“ Oh — er — quite,” he returned somewhat embarrassedly.

Sally June who had never seen the reverend gentleman armed with anything less than perfect aplomb was amazed and interested in his conduct. Gone was the complacency which she detested. In the presence of these two who had known him all his life, he became suddenly a gauche school boy. Almost she felt sorry for him.

Making a manifest effort to recover mastery of the situation the Reverend Morrisson went on to observe that since Miss Serena was getting on so well and was in such capable hands — a little bow and an effort at gallantry — directed to Sally June — he would not tire her by a long call. He would come again soon. Would always be glad to come when Miss Serena needed him.

Miss Serena murmured rather sardonically for her that she didn't think she should particularly need him — until it was time to read the burial service — and she was sure they would let him know in time for that.

## *April and Sally June*

“ Why, she doesn’t like him either,” puzzled Sally June. “ She despises him as much as I do. More.”

William coughed again and protested. Miss Serena would live a long time yet. She must not talk nonsense. Certainly he would see her often.

Whereupon Miss Serena suggested mildly that he need not trouble. So long as Douglas was at hand to call upon — and Sally June — she scarcely needed the Reverend Morrisson. It was probably as near discourtesy and inhospitality as the little lady ever came in her life. The Reverend Morrisson was all but shown the door. Sally June wanted to shout out “ Hooray.”

He made the best of his discomfiture, muttered something about an important appointment, clasped Miss Serena’s limp little hand, bowed again to Sally June and glanced at Douglas, still standing rather grim and silent.

“ I’ll go down with you,” said Douglas.

The two men passed out of the room. The

door closed upon them. Sally June and Miss Serena were alone.

“ Nobody ever told me they were brothers,” burst out Sally June.

“ Half,” said Miss Serena a little curtly. “ Different fathers. The Pines was the old Kincaid home. It belongs to Douglas though William lived there, of course, as a child. They were brought up together.”

Brought up together! That beautiful old house which used to hold magic and lost it! Those two growing up under the same roof! The same mother! Such different, different men!

Sally June suddenly realized that Miss Serena was looking at her with a curious fixedness. Beneath that serene, but penetrating look, Sally June flushed. She knew Miss Serena had guessed her secret.

“ Yes, it is queer, isn’t it? ” Miss Serena answered the girl’s thought though she had not spoken it aloud. “ Like that sometimes. Poor Gracia! I loved her but I never saw eye to eye with her in some things. For in-

## *April and Sally June*

stance she only respected Colonel Kincaid and loved Willie Morrisson — not half the man — her second husband, desperately, almost idolatrously. Something the same with the boys. She worshipped William. It used to hurt me. Douglas loved her passionately as boys sometimes do love their mothers but it was always William with her. Douglas never seemed to count.

Sally June's heart ached too. She had a vision of that sensitive, deeply tender lad, pouring out a devotion on a mother who hardly heeded it, who saw only that other younger boy, child of a father adored, instead of merely respected. Why, it was a little tragedy, in its way! Love was a rather terrible thing, just as she had said to Douglas, last Sunday.

“Sally June, maybe they will tell you tales about Douglas some time, tales that will hurt you to hear.” Miss Serena's voice was low. She was very tired but she wanted to say just one thing more to Sally June before she went to sleep.



## *April and Sally June*

“ Yes,” said Sally June soberly. “ They have already.”

“ I wish I could tell you that they are all lies. But I don’t know whether they are or not. Douglas does not deny them himself. He never denied them at the time. But I’ve always believed in him, even against his own verdict. I always shall believe in him. There’s been a key lost somewhere, deliberately lost — by some one. I am sure of it. Believe in him too, Sally June, if you can.”

“ I do.” Sally June’s voice was very low but Miss Serena heard it.

“ I am glad,” she said. “ He needs somebody to believe in him — to love him. He has had a very hard life in some ways. Now, dearie, I’m going to rest. Run down and have your tea with Douglas and then go out, both of you for a little walk. I’m sure there’ll be a lovely sunset. Don’t worry about me. Have a good time. Kiss me, Sally June. Child, child, you are very lovely. And so young. Sally June, it’s a wonderful thing to be young.”

And Sally June flying downstairs almost

## *April and Sally June*

into Douglas Kincaid's arms as he stood at the foot of them, felt too that it was a wonderful thing to be young and to be in love, in love and loved back. For she saw in this man's eyes even before his lips said it, that he cared too.

"Sally June!" She was still a step or two above him, which brought their faces almost to a level. "Sally June, darling. I didn't mean to tell you now. I'm not sure that I ever meant to tell you, but I can't help it. I love you. I'm going to keep on loving you as long as I live, little Miss April, with stars in your eyes."

"Oh," gasped Sally June, the stars sparkling more than ever, "But,—but, you've only met me three times."

He smiled.

"I know, but does that much matter, Sally June?"

And Sally June stammered happily that she didn't know that it did — very much.

And there was that.

Miss Serena was perfectly correct in her prophecy of the fine sunset. There was a roy-

## *April and Sally June*

ally splendid one, crimson and gold and amethyst. But Sally June and her lover were but vaguely aware of its glory as they sat, hand in hand on the top of a little heaven kissing hill, looking westward.

“ Little Sally June,” Douglas was saying, “ to think I found you here in Cameronville, the town I swore once I’d never come back to as long as I lived! I seemed to have to come this spring in spite of my swearing. And no wonder. For here was an April girl waiting for me, though I never knew it. Sally June, I think I began to love you that first minute, that Sunday morning in your prim, Puritan gray frock and Pan dancing in your eyes. You were so utterly young and sweet — like April. Oh, Sally June! ”

“ Oh, Douglas! ” Sally June smiled back, having bent over to pick a daisy. “ Did you really think I was nice? I’m sure I fell head over heels in love with you, right then and there, though, of course, I didn’t admit it. The Puritan wouldn’t listen to Pan. It didn’t dare. And to think I was as mad as anything

## *April and Sally June*

at having to go to church that morning. And indeed, I wouldn't have gone if Miss Curry hadn't made herself disgustingly sick on plum duff and waffles. Isn't it absurd? And to think you are a really, truly writer when I love books better than anything in the world! And we can go to Spain and Italy and India — everywhere — all over the world. Oh, dear! Is it really me that all this is happening to? Maybe you'd better pinch me to see if I'm awake."

Douglas laughed and remarked that he preferred to kiss her which he did.

"And when will you run away with me, Sally June? Next week? The week after?"

Mercy, no! Sally June flushed and smiled and drew a little farther away from him, putting a clump of daisies between her and her lover. They must wait a long time. Maybe in a year —

A year! How old was this ridiculously young person beside him? Twenty-three. Of course. Twenty-three could wait a year. Forty couldn't. Forty had wasted far too

## *April and Sally June*

much time already. It had to be June at the latest. June — soon — Sally June — honeymoon! See how it all rhymed.

“ You daren’t make it later than June,” he told her teasing but still in deep earnest, underneath. “ I’ll put a jinx on you if you do. I’ve not lived in the far east for nothing.”

And Sally June agreed to June and reached out her hand to him across the daisies.

It wasn’t until the crimson and gold and amethyst had faded into a pale, exquisite mother of pearl tint and a star had come out over the big, elm tree that Sally June once remembered that this man beside her was the one that Miss Bainbridge had forbidden her to have anything to do with, the man whom Miss Browne declared so positively was not “ good,” whom even Miss Serena admitted to have had a past to which the key was lost. It was Douglas himself that reminded her.

“ Sally June, dear, you have heard from Hannah Barr — perhaps from other sources, too, that I’m a black sheep. Cameronville disapproves of me with all its heart. There is an

old story — not a pretty one. It is a tale I would very much prefer not to tell if you would think it not unfair to you to let the ashes stay ashes. Could you manage to take me on trust, little lady, and believe that whatever there has been in the past, the present and the future are all yours to command, that I love you with all my heart and will do my utmost always to make and keep you happy? Is that enough to satisfy you, dear? Think hard before you answer. It is very important. It means your happiness and mine.”

“ I don’t need to think. I know. I don’t care what they say. I don’t want to know anything you would rather not tell me. I love you. And if you love a person you just have to believe in him, don’t you? I do anyway.” There was a faint quiver in Sally June’s voice, she meant what she said so very deeply.

He lifted her hand to his lips.

“ Bless you, little Sally June. You are sweeter and dearer than I deserve. But please God, you’ll never regret giving yourself to me.



## *April and Sally June*

I'll keep you safe, Sally June. Safe and happy."

"I know you will, Douglas," sighed Sally June. "I never, never felt so safe in the world, nor so happy."

And then they realized that it was getting dark and that they had left Miss Serena a long time. They went down from their heaven kissing hill to the dusty road and the meadows already damp with evening fog. The stars were out now in considerable numbers. They two and the stars had the world to themselves. But no. A car stood by the road side — empty. Odd, in such a quiet place, no house anywhere near. Sally June wondered who had left it there and why. She saw her companion look at it too with a curious intentness, a slight lowering of his brows.

As they passed the car and went down the road, Sally June caught a glimpse of two figures, a man and a woman, just emerging from the pine wood across the meadow, the woman, a slim little creature in white, almost a child, she seemed, so small, so dainty. Sally

## *April and Sally June*

June caught her breath. Suddenly she realized who the two were. It was the Reverend William Morrisson and the child like figure was Hallie Gerrard. So that was Hallie's Miracle Man. What a fool she had been not to guess before, knowing the Reverend Morrisson and his penchant for the adulation of pretty girls! Why, once he had wanted to kiss her—Sally June—and had been snubbed and put in his place. That had been nothing. But this—Heavens, what a mess! That little idiot of a Hallie!

The two coming out of the wood evidently perceived Sally June and Douglas at about the same time that the former recognized them. Instantly both disappeared behind a thicket of scrub birch. Sally June might almost have thought she had dreamed their appearance so swiftly and thoroughly had they vanished. William Morrisson was taking no chances although a bit late in his precaution.

Sally June shot a quick glance at Douglas. Had he too recognized the man and the girl?

If so he did not comment upon what he had

## *April and Sally June*

seen. He simply accelerated his pace a little and Sally June took a few quick, dancing steps to catch up with him.

Silence fell between them. Sally June almost forgot her own happiness worrying about her friend. She was thankful for Hallie's statement last Monday that she — they — would not do anything really wrong. But what good would that do if somebody saw them at their clandestine meeting? Cameronville wouldn't believe that there was no wrong. Even the Reverend Morrisson's excellent reputation would hardly protect him. Certainly it wouldn't protect Hallie. And if it were a question of sink or swim, Sally June rather thought he would swim and leave Hallie to sink. Certainly all for love and the world well lost was not a part of his philosophy. The world was very much with the Reverend Morrisson, late and soon and all the time. And there was Dolly and her money. It wasn't likely he would run any chance of losing her and it. Still, this affair with Hallie must be rather more serious than the usual

## *April and Sally June*

semi-platonic friendships in which he delighted to indulge, for the health of his self esteem. Even he seemed to have lost his cool head a little in this affair with Hallie. He was going foolhardy lengths though he was far from being what is usually considered a foolhardy person.

Again she glanced at her companion. She hated to talk to him about this half brother of his whom he apparently did not particularly love. But Hallie must somehow be saved from her folly and she had an idea that if anybody could turn the trick, Douglas Kincaid could. He seemed to be able to dominate most difficult situations. She had to plunge in, even if the plunge was distasteful to her and to him. She had to think of Hallie.

“Douglas, did you see — your brother — just now?”

“Yes.” The brief monosyllable was not encouraging but Sally June had to go on.

“The girl with him is one of my best friends — one of the teachers at Hannah Barr. She is awfully pretty and awfully — foolish. She

## *April and Sally June*

ought not to meet him like that. Somebody has to tell him to stop. He'll get her into trouble. I don't mean, of course, that there is anything — anything really wrong — ” Sally June's cheeks flamed in the dark. “ Hallie is really a darling but — but — ”

“ I understand. Very well, Sally June. It shall be stopped.” His tone was comfortingly decisive. “ I am not especially fond of interfering with Bill's affairs but if the girl is a friend of yours, the case is different. Don't worry. There'll be no more of this sort of thing.”

“ Oh! ” Sally June's tone was immensely relieved. “ But can you? Can you stop it, I mean? ”

His smile was grim.

“ I can. You may not think it, Sally June, but I have a great deal of — of influence — with Bill. Is your friend really much in love with him? ”

“ I am afraid so,” sighed Sally June. “ I knew she was in love with some one but never dreamed it was he until tonight. I knew —

## *April and Sally June*

well — that he likes the ladies rather well but I've always imagined he was too discreet to put himself into a position that might be misunderstood."

"Precisely. Bill is — ordinarily — the soul of discretion. Indeed, his strong point is usually the better part of valor. But it looked as if his discretion had slipped a cog this time. It was just as well it was you and I rather than some other Cameronvillian that saw them. He might have had some difficulty in explaining. Don't look so bothered, child. I tell you this business will stop absolutely as soon as I can get hold of Bill. I am sorry for your little friend. But maybe she will enjoy having a broken heart for a bit. Girls do sometimes, don't they?" he asked with a twinkle at Sally June.

"I don't know," she answered soberly. "I never had one to enjoy — or otherwise."

He sobered too at that.

"And you are never going to find out. There aren't going to be any heart breaks. Not if I can help it."



## *April and Sally June*

And Sally June wrapped in the magic garment of joy and love and illusion believed it. She could never know heart break because she would always have Douglas and having him, what else could reach her to do her hurt?



## *Chapter VII*

BACK at the cottage they found Miss Serena sleeping quietly, the long, refreshing sleep which was going to bring her quickly to recovery. But the nurse informed them that she would need more tablets. The doctor had left a limited supply only. There was a prescription to be filled. Would Mr. Kincaid attend to it?

Of course, Mr. Kincaid would. He was off for town straightway on Jerry's back.

Sally June left alone, wandered about, happy but dazed and feeling a little let down and anti-climactic. She wanted to go and sit beside Miss Serena but it was evident that the nurse would not approve of such a proceeding. The patient must not be disturbed. Sally June yielded the point and tried to read in the sitting room though with little success. Never had she so needed a woman to talk to. Miss Serena whom she wanted so much was asleep.

## *April and Sally June*

The stiff starched nurse was no person to confide in. Neither was Hester, though she at least was sympathetic in manner, suspecting perhaps what had happened between "Master Douglas" and Miss Sally June.

It was almost a relief when the telephone rang. Anything to give her something to do, break the silence which enveloped the house.

The call was for Douglas. It was Anna, at The Pines, speaking. A telegram had come. Telegrams for Master Douglas were important. Should she open this and read it aloud to Miss Sally June so that he might get it the moment he returned?

Sally June considered a second. She did not like receiving other people's important messages, unauthorized. Still, why not? Were his affairs not hers now? "All right. Read it, Anna," she assented.

"Come New York immediately. Must see you. Vitally important. Concerns daughter Bettina. Best love. Mary Muldane." These were the words that Sally June transcribed with steady hand and read back aloud to Anna

## *April and Sally June*

for verification, with steady voice. Then she hung up the receiver, folded over the sheet of paper on which she had written, and wrote on the outside, "This is a copy of a telegram which came for you at The Pines. They asked me to take it for you. S. J. F."

Then, telling Hester to be sure Mr. Kincaid got the message the moment he got in, she went slowly upstairs, all the elation and buoyancy and joy gone out of her.

If only, only she had not let Anna read her the message! And yet, what did it matter? Better know these things, look them in the face, if one had to.

At the head of the stairs she met the nurse.

"You can go in. She's awake now. I am going down to make her some broth," the stiff starched person volunteered.

Sally June went in.

"What was the name of the woman that they say Douglas loved?" Sally June knew she ought not to disturb Miss Serena at such a time, that it was abominably selfish of her. But she could not help it. She had to ask —

had to know. Since she had written down that telegram she was an entirely different person from the Sally June she knew. This new person had no consideration, no pride. She was just one scorching, scathing question. Who was this Mary Muldane that dared command Douglas Kincaid like that, who sent him her best love over the wires?

Miss Serena stared at her wonderingly, as well she might. Neither the fierce question nor the manner of it was like Sally June.

“The woman they say Douglas loved? You mean Dolly Vanderford — Dolly Morrisson?”

“No. No. The other woman — the actress.”

“Oh. Her name was Miriam — Marian — no, Mary. Mary Muldane. She wasn’t an actress till afterward, after her husband died.”

What did it matter when she was an actress? The only thing that mattered was that she still dominated Douglas Kincaid, after all these years, dared to command him to her will.

## *April and Sally June*

He had said that whatever the past had held, the present and the future were all hers, Sally June's very own. But were they? How could they be if such messages could come for him? And Bettina — whose daughter? Had not somebody hinted — ? Another terrible question blazed up inside Sally June. It was like a prairie fire, one darting flame after another, and who knew when and where it would end?

“ And did people say that her child was — ” Sally June's cheeks were hot but she went on. She had to. “ Did they say the child was — his? ”

Miss Serena surveyed Sally June with something of the aloofness with which she had regarded William Morrisson that afternoon.

“ Yes, my dear. I believe there were people that said even that. So you don't believe in him, after all, Sally June? ” she questioned sorrowfully.

“ No,” said Sally June. “ Not — not just this minute. But I hope — oh, I do hope I am



## *April and Sally June*

going to again, pretty soon. It doesn't seem as if I could bear it — not to."

Miss Serena looked intently at the girl, seemed to look down, down into her very heart.

"But you love him," she said at last.

Sally June bowed her head.

"Yes. I love him and I — I don't believe in him. Isn't it terrible?"

The clatter of hoofs. Jerry returning. And Jerry's master. They heard the front door open and close again. Heard Hester's low voice, murmuring something. Sally June's hand clenched tight. He was reading the message now. What would he do about it? Would he go? Would he stay here with her and Miss Serena?

A few minutes later he came up, followed by the nurse and her bowl of broth.

Miss Serena was assuring him in answer to his questions that she was much better, quite well now, in fact, had had a wonderful sleep.

"That's splendid. Just keep it up, Miss Serena, ma'am. I've got to go to New York

## *April and Sally June*

tonight on the midnight on imperative business. You are sure you are going to be all right?"

"Quite sure," she told him tranquilly. "You have done everything, my dear. I'm so grateful. Go if you must though we shall miss you dreadfully. I'll still have Sally June."

He looked at Sally June then questioningly. Of course, he was wondering why she had not told Miss Serena. Sally June did not meet his gaze. She felt rather than saw it. Imperative business, indeed. Till this minute she had counted on his refusing to go away, believed in her heart that he would let Mary Muldane and her daughter Bettina and her vitally important affairs go hang. But he was doing nothing of the sort. It was Sally June he was letting go hang, two hours after he told her that he loved her.

He was saying goodbye to Miss Serena now, to the nurse. Then —

"Aren't you coming down to see me off, Sally June?" There was a lover's plea in his

## *April and Sally June*

tone but Sally June hardened her heart to it. Her pride was cut too deep.

“No. I’ll say goodbye here.” Her hands were clasped behind her back. “And wish you — best of luck — in the — the business,” she added.

He looked at her intently for a moment. She knew she was hurting him, hurting him terribly. His eyes had that tired look which always made her heart ache for him. And this time it was she who had brought it there. Queer, she seemed to be two selves! One self was stricken with remorse, the other was glad, horridly glad that she had hurt him, paid him back for hurting herself so desperately.

If the nurse hadn’t been there, the tender hearted, remorseful self might have conquered the other. She might have gone to his arms and his kiss as she knew he was begging her to come. But the nurse was there, terribly stiff starched. And Sally June’s hurt pride was there too, starched even stiffer.

And then it was too late to relent. Douglas Kincaid wasn’t a person to sue for favors. In

## *April and Sally June*

a minute he was gone. Then Jerry's hoofs on the hard road, fainter, fainter, lost at last in the silence of the night.

Listening, with strained ears, Sally June wondered how she could have been so cruel — so cruel. How could one be cruel to somebody one loved so much? Last week she would have said it was impossible. But last week she had not been so sadly wise as she was tonight. She had not known that one could be so utterly, heavenly happy as she had been, out on the hill tonight with Douglas. Nor had she known how frightful a thing it was to be scorched and blackened with jealousy, to be hurt so deep, so terribly deep. She was learning things very fast these days. Why, even tonight she had said that one had to believe when one loved. Not even that was true. She loved. Oh, yes. But she did not believe. That was the worst, as she had said to Miss Serena. To love and not to trust!

The nurse went out.

“Come here, little Sally June,” said Miss Serena.

## *April and Sally June*

Sally June came and knelt by the bed, the gentle, old hand carressing the bowed, bright head.

“Tell me what has happened, Sally June.”

“She sent for him — that woman — Mary Muldane — tonight. And he went — left me just after he told me he loved me. Oh, Miss Serena, I don’t love him the way you loved Dad. I wanted to hurt him. Wanted to. And I’d rather he was dead than have another woman have him, call him to her when she wants him.”

“Sally June!”

“Oh, don’t listen to me. I don’t mean it. Of course, I don’t mean it. It’s only that I’m so unhappy and I wish, I wish I’d kissed him goodbye.”

It was fairly late the next night that Sally June got back to the school, leaving Miss Serena perforce to the capable, if impersonal, care of the stiff starched nurse and the loving, tireless service of little Hester. Monday morning was just ahead and Sally June had to resume her duties as Instructress.

## *April and Sally June*

Utterly spent by the experiences through which she had passed, too tired to feel any emotion of any sort, she crept into bed, thankful for the quiet and darkness and solitude.

But solitude was not for Sally June just yet, nor quiet. Hardly had she extinguished her light when Hallie Gerrard came in, a Hallie, crushed, tearful, hurt and bitterly resentful.

“He says we mustn’t ever see each other again alone,” she sobbed. “It is all over and it’s all the fault of that hateful man—his brother—Douglas Kincaid. He called Wi—er—the Reverend Morrisson last night and threatened him somehow. I don’t know how. Said he’d do something awful to Wi—Reverend Morrisson if he didn’t keep away from me. As if it were his business—as if it were anybody’s business but ours.”

So he hadn’t forgotten. In spite of the imperative business he had taken time before he left town last night to straighten things out as he had promised. That at least Sally June was grateful for.

“It’s bla—black magic he uses,” Hallie



## *April and Sally June*

sobbed on, rocking to and fro and crooning out her woe. "It must be, else William wouldn't pay any attention to him. He's lived in the Orient and I know he knows all sorts of horrid things like hypnotism and — and everything. Or else it's blackmail. What is blackmail, Sally June?" Hallie paused long enough to wipe her eyes with a diminutive handkerchief while she asked the question.

"Blackmail? Why, it's getting money or something out of you because you are afraid of somebody's telling something he knows about you — something you are afraid to have known."

"Oh, is that it? Well, it can't be blackmail then. I am sure the Reverend Morrisson never did anything he is afraid to have known."

"No? I wonder if he wouldn't be afraid to have people know he had been meeting you alone at night and out in the woods like Saturday."

"Sally June! That's not fair. Nobody wants everything he does talked about by

## *April and Sally June*

every Jack Robinson. You wouldn't yourself. I'll bet anything you don't want Miss Bainbridge to know you were out walking with Douglas Kincaid, when you were pretending to be staying with Miss Serena. You needn't talk, Sally June. It's the pot and the kettle between you and me. I guess if it came to a show down I'd come out better than you. Everybody knows what Douglas Kincaid is. A perfectly dreadful man!"

Sally June did not answer. She did not want to discuss Douglas Kincaid with Hallie or with any one.

But Hallie did not bother to wait for answers anyway. She was too full of her own importance as the victim of a tragic, interrupted love affair.

"There wasn't a thing wrong in our meeting," she argued. "We always talked about poetry and religion and — and well, lots of things. He called me his little disciple and I learned, oh, so much from him. And he was so lonely. His wife doesn't understand him, just sneers at him and won't — won't have any

## *April and Sally June*

children. And he wants them dreadfully. Often he's so sad and he says I — make him happier. And now it's all spoiled. Couldn't you and Douglas Kincaid have looked the other way? Couldn't you have pretended not to see us? We wouldn't have told on you."

"Told on you!" The phrase made Sally June feel a little sick. It made Romance a sordid, cheap affair, a back stairs, servant girl kind of thing.

"You don't understand, Hallie. Please don't tell any one but I have a right to be with Douglas Kincaid. I'm engaged to him."

"Engaged to him!" Hallie stared at her friend in utter amazement. "Sally June! But you've only met him a few times. How many, really, Sally June?"

Sally June admitted that it was only three but —

"But, Sally June, haven't you heard the stories about him? Everybody knows he had an affair with a married woman — the actress, Mary Muldane. It just about broke his

## *April and Sally June*

mother's heart. Cameronville says all sorts of things about him."

"No doubt. Cameronville has a wonderful imagination!" snapped Sally June.

"If he had been the kind of man that gets married he would have, long before this," went on Hallie not too logically. "Are you sure, Sally June that he really wanted to marry you — not just — well, you know — ?" Hallie's eyes were big. She was remembering all the thrilling stories she had read of unscrupulous men who kept pretty foolish girls in gilded cages, without benefit of clergy.

"Hallie Gerrard! How dare you say such things?" Sally June's cheeks blazed.

"But did he ask you right out, say in so many words he wanted to marry you?"

"Of course he wants to marry me—in June," was on the tip of Sally June's tongue and then she heard Douglas Kincaid's voice in her ears. "And when will you run away with me, Sally June? Next week? The week after?" Had he really ever said the word "marriage?" Sally June couldn't recall

that he had. There had been talk of running away with her, of being together in Spain, in Cairo and Paris, talk of keeping her safe and happy, but of marrying her? The word had not been spoken though for Sally June at least it had been taken for granted.

“That is our business, not any one’s else,” she flashed back hotly at Hallie. It couldn’t be, it couldn’t that he had meant that. And yet, when girls gave themselves so easily, let themselves be kissed at the first meeting, didn’t men take things for granted, men who were not—not good themselves, who made love even to the wives of other men?

“Oh, very well, if you choose to be so hoity toity,” sniffed Hallie, offended. “Go ahead and butt your head against a wall if you want to. But don’t try and act superior with me. You’ve been meeting a man everybody knows is disreputable, on the sly. I’ll bet he made love to you that very first night when he was fixing your ankle though you took mighty good care not to tell me that part. There, he

## *April and Sally June*

did. You are blushing. I knew at the time you were not telling all there was to tell."

"What if I didn't? That was my affair, wasn't it?" Sally June was cornered and she knew it.

"Yes, and my meeting William Morrisson is mine but you and your precious Douglas have to interfere with us. If you are engaged to him, why don't you announce it, go and tell Miss Bainbridge? Why, doesn't he face the music like a man? William said he had gone to New York. What is he doing in New York when he's just got engaged to you?"

"He had to go—on business," retorted Sally June stoutly though her heart felt anything but stout. "Hallie, please, let's not talk any more about it tonight. I'm so tired and I'm not very happy either."

"You poor darling." Instantly Hallie was all compassion. She loved Sally June very dearly and the thought of her being unhappy hurt.

She came over and put her arms around her



## *April and Sally June*

friend, tears running down her cheeks, tears for Sally June who was not crying at all for herself but sat looking all white and still and turned to stone, tears for herself and her white dream courtship with the man who called her his "little disciple" and who now said they must never meet again alone.

"Sally June, you are right about William and me," she whispered. "I know it is dangerous just as well as you do, though I've pretended all along that I didn't. I don't mean dangerous because Miss Bainbridge might find it out, dangerous for me — because I love him so. Oh, I know it's all wrong. He's married and I ought to stop loving him this minute. But I can't — I can't. You can't love and unlove to order, Sally June."

"I know," sighed Sally June with all her heart. "But we can go to bed and try to sleep. And we've got to. I'll make us some malted milk and then tuck you up in bed." As usual it was Sally June who became sternly practical, even if her heart was nearer breaking than she cared to admit, Sally June who had her lover's

promise that heart break should never come near her.

Hallie docilely drank her malted milk and let Sally June tuck her up in bed. Ten minutes later she was fast asleep, the tears still undried on her cheeks.

But for Sally June there was no sleep. Her mind worked all night at fever pressure.

“ I don’t care. I will believe in him. Tomorrow he will be back and everything will be straightened out. And he did mean he wanted me to marry him. He did. He never meant the other thing. Never. Never.”

And with this thought distinctly impressed upon her mind, Sally June fell asleep at last at dawn, just as the birds began their faint, drowsy twittering. And in her sleep she dreamed that Douglas had come back to Cameronville and her.

And Douglas Kincaid did come back that afternoon — to Cameronville, but not to Sally June. So far as Sally June was concerned he might just as well have not come back, have been still with Mary Muldane in New York.

## *April and Sally June*

No letter or message came to her that day or the next. Yet he was back, had come back on the four o'clock train Monday afternoon. All Cameronville knew that and knew too, that he had come back drunk, staggering from the train, white faced and distraught in manner. Old Abe Hawkins who had taken him out to The Pines in his ramshackle old car, which was always "for hire" about the station, had verified this report.

"Drunk, man! Sure, he was, drunk as a lord! That nigger woman of his came out to meet him and she had to help him up the steps. He sure was drunk. Gave me five dollars and told me to keep the change. Ill wind that blows nobody good." Old Abe had chuckled over his windfall and told the story to everybody that would listen, Douglas Kincaid getting drunker and drunker with each recital of the incident.

The story flew about town like an autumn leaf in a gale, reached Hannah Barr and in due time reached Sally June Fenton who held her head high and made no comment.

## *April and Sally June*

Tuesday night there was a little dance at the Country Club. Sally June went with Professor Parkes and danced and danced and laughed and chattered and was generally the gayest of the gay.

“What is the matter with Sally June?” one young man asked another. “I never saw her look prettier but she’s what my old grandmother calls ‘fey,’ sort of mad like and reckless. If the Club weren’t so strictly tee total and old Arthur such a sobersides I’d say he’d given her a swig out of a pocket flask.”

“Stuff and nonsense!” protested the other. “Sally June doesn’t need a pocket flask to make her happy. She was born that way.”

But Arthur Parkes knew better than either of the commenters that Sally June’s gaiety was forced. It wasn’t the real Sally June that laughed and jested and flirted. It was some sort of a changeling who looked like Sally June and had Sally June’s quick, pirouetting little feet, and sparkling eyes and red lips but who wasn’t really Sally June at all.

Certainly it was not the Sally June he knew

## *April and Sally June*

that nearly snapped his head off, coming home in the flivver, when he tried to find out what was the matter. Nor was it the Sally June he knew whose eyes were bright with tears a minute later. His Sally June was never stormy tempered and never, never cried. By this time he was really worried. Was she sick?

She had laughed at that, a rather pathetic little laugh with the tears still near the surface.

"Of course I'm not sick," she protested. "I'm just getting to be one of those horrid persons who boast that they never had a wink of sleep last night. I didn't truly not till cock crow, nor the night before that either. Don't worry. It's nothing. Spring fever maybe but it does make me cross. Forgive me. I didn't mean to take your head off just now. You are awfully good to me," she said gratefully.

"But Sally June, why aren't you sleeping? What is it that is bothering you? There are dark shadows under your eyes," he accused.

"Are there? And I'm making my nose red

## *April and Sally June*

weeping silly tears over nothing. Where is my powder? ”

And Sally June whipped out a vanity case and proceeded to repair damages.

Looking up and meeting his troubled gaze she said that he was not to worry. Everything would come out in the wash.

“ There’s an old Anglo Saxon poem,” she told him “ that goes something like this:

“ ‘ That passed over and so will this.’ I’ll be all right by — next week,” she promised recklessly.

But Arthur shook his head. He wasn’t reassured.

“ I can’t help worrying, Sally June. I know I promised not to pester you but if only you would give me the right to look after you. I do love you so, Sally June. Won’t you marry me? ”

For a minute she was tempted. Arthur offered so safe and calm a haven for the storm tossed boat which was Sally June. And her pride, her cruelly hurt pride! Marriage with



## *April and Sally June*

Arthur would be such a balm to it. She could show Douglas Kincaid that she didn't care. He could go to New York a hundred times, come back as drunk as he liked, be forever at the beck and call of Mary Muldane, it would not matter to her — not if she were married to Arthur. But wouldn't it? Wouldn't it matter just as much as it did now only then she wouldn't have the right to care as she cared now, to suffer as she had been suffering now for three long nights.

"Oh, dear," she said aloud. "I wish I could, Arthur. Truly, I do. It would be so much simpler."

"Simpler than what?"

"Simpler than — than everything." she summed up rather ambiguously. "It is no use, Arthur. I am afraid I am like my father. I can't seem to do the thing that would be right and happy and best for everybody. I have to follow after strange gods. I'm sorry, truly I am." And she was.

And Arthur acquiesced humbly as was his way and made Sally June promise that if

## *April and Sally June*

there was anything he could do for her at any time she was to send for him.

“ I mean it, Sally June,” he said. “ There is nothing, absolutely nothing, I wouldn’t do for you.”

This was at midnight on Tuesday. Wednesday brought a new sensation to Cameronville, a sensation which fairly set it tottering like an earthquake. Mary Muldane had come to town, had engaged the best room at the Parker Hotel and rushed off in a hired car almost as soon as she arrived. Where was she going? To The Pines? Certainly she had started in that direction. Was Douglas Kincaid still there? Nobody knew. Nobody had seen him since his disgraceful home coming on Monday. Presumably he was there working off his spree. And now the woman was coming brazenly to join him. Frightful! There ought to be a law to prevent such outrageous goings on.

Cameronville — especially female Cameronville — resented Mary Muldane’s exquisite clothes, the fact that she looked scarcely thirty when she must be nearly forty. The wages of

## *April and Sally June*

sin ought not to be Paris clothes and beauty and youth. The woman should look like an evil old hag. But she did nothing of the sort. She looked instead precisely like what half the self righteous old maids that beheld her would have sold their souls to look like and never, never could.

And then she came back, giving swift, imperious orders, gave up her room in the hotel, tipped a boy generously to bring down her bag, came down the walk to the car which still waited, a marvelously lovely woman, dark eyed, with skin like a white rose, a step buoyant and firm, a figure such as a sculptor might have dreamed, slender yet beautifully curved.

It was just before she got into the car that the thing happened which all but knocked the gossips speechless. The Reverend Morrisson came along the street by chance. Seeing her he paused, turned a little white. For an instant they stood silent, looking into each other's eyes. Then he took off his hat, made an eager step in her direction with outstretched hand. For another instant she stood

## *April and Sally June*

motionless, looking him through and through and then turned on her little high heels and left him without a word. The Reverend Morrison had been given the cut direct by a scarlet woman in a white crêpe de chine frock. Amazing effrontery!

“Back to The Pines now again, please, and hurry,” she said to the driver in clear tones that carried even to the veranda of the Parker Hotel.

Of course, it did not take long for all this to get through the walls of Hannah Barr. Not a few of the Faculty were old timers who had been years in the school and more years in the town and some of these loved gossip as Miss Curry loved plum duff. The Kincaid Muldane affair was hashed and rehashed, revamped and improved upon till it would hardly have recognized itself. Sally June listened as little as possible but she heard enough perforce to make her heart sick.

“That scar he has is where her husband shot him,” contributed Miss Blane whose little starved soul so hungered for the romance that

## *April and Sally June*

she never had had, that it was meat and drink to her to hover, fascinated and shocked at the same time, over the details of this old-new scandal. "Serves him right. He ought to wear a scar. The woman too. To show what she is, the way that woman in the book had to wear the scarlet letter, you know, the one who loved a minister."

"Oh, do hush," cried Hallie Gerrard sharply. "I think you are regular ghouls, all of you. If they are bad, we can't help it, but we don't need to be sniffing round the thing like wolves at a kill. It is disgusting. Come on, Sally June, let's go and make some tea. I'm sick of this talk."

And she drew Sally June after her into her own room and shut the door.

"Sally June, darling, I'm so sorry for you. It's just awful. I don't see how you stand it. But aren't you thankful—thankful that nobody knows about you and—and him, that you thought you were going to marry him?"

"But I am going to marry him," declared Sally June fiercely.

## *April and Sally June*

“Sally June! Not after he’s had that woman in his house? You know you wouldn’t. You couldn’t.”

“He can’t help it if she followed him. I don’t know, Hallie. I’ve thought and thought until I can’t think. Something way down deep inside me knows that he isn’t like that. I wouldn’t have loved him if he had been.”

“But Sally June, if he were worth loving wouldn’t he have written you, tried to get in touch with you all this time?”

Sally June made a despairing little gesture. As if Hallie needed to ask her that question. No, of course, he wasn’t worth loving. Her mind told her that over and over conclusively. Only her stubborn heart insisted that it didn’t matter, worthy or not, she loved him, just the same.

Restlessly Hallie moved over to the window. She had forgotten her promise to make tea. It had been only a ruse anyway to get Sally June away before anybody saw how she was suffering.



## *April and Sally June*

"Mercy!" she exclaimed. "There's old H. G. coming up the driveway, looking as if he had been on a diet of nails. Somebody's going to catch it. Oh!"

And suddenly Hallie went white and clung to Sally June.

"Sally June, Sally June! You don't think he has heard about me and — and William? He couldn't. Oh, he couldn't. Oh, Sally June, I'm so scared. You were right. I was a fool — a fool. Oh, there is somebody at the door."

There was a knock. It was Tim.

"Please, Miss Fenton, Miss Bainbridge asks you to come down to her room at once."

"Oh, Sally June!" moaned Hallie.

"Hush," said Sally June and with head high, walked out of the room and down the stairs.

Miss Bainbridge was seated in a stiff, high backed chair, a chair which looked as grim and inexorable as its occupant. Near by, in a big easy chair, the light from the rose shaded

## *April and Sally June*

lamp falling full on his shining, bald pate, sat H. G. Hartley. His small, piggy eyes gleamed balefully as they fell on Sally June Fenton, standing there on the threshold, with composed manner and heavy heart.

“Ah! Ha!” Those eyes seemed to say. “Didn’t I tell you? You’ll see.”

“Come in, Miss Fenton. Close the door behind you.”

It was Miss Bainbridge who spoke in an icily calm voice, the judicial voice that Sally June had heard often enough turned on for the benefit of the “young ladies.”

She came in, closing the door behind her. Nobody asked her to sit down, but she could no more have sat down, had she been invited, than she could have jumped over the moon.

Things began to swim a little before her. For days she had scarcely slept or eaten. Mustn’t faint. Mustn’t give in. Mustn’t give them the satisfaction of worsting her.

“Oh, let them get it over quick!” she prayed. “Let them fire me — do anything. Only get it done.”

## *April and Sally June*

So her heart cried out but her brave young lips were silent. She stood there before her judges, a little white but holding her ground gallantly, descendant of pioneers and soldiers that she was.

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## *Chapter VIII*

MISS BAINBRIDGE cleared her throat.

“ Miss Fenton, a short time ago, you were so unfortunate as to sprain your ankle while walking on a lonely road, at a somewhat late hour, at a place and at a time that were singularly unsuitable for a young woman to be, particularly for a member of our Faculty.”

“ Yes, Miss Bainbridge.”

“ Serves you right,” said Pig Eyes. “ No sprained ankle, no ruined reputation, no dismissal from Hannah Barr if only you had shown a grain of sense that afternoon.”

What if Sally June chose to play tit for tat, tell what she knew about Pig Eyes? What would be the use? Miss Bainbridge would not believe her. And in any case she would not do it, would not soil her high pride by relating

## *April and Sally June*

that sordid little Sunday afternoon incident, nor perpetuate the memory of it by setting the vibration of words in motion recording it. Sink or swim, she would not tell that part of the story. Perhaps the smug, bald pated gentleman in the easy chair opposite knew that very well, counted on Sally June's proud, young reticence.

"As it happened," proceeded Miss Bainbridge, "some one came along even at that unlikely hour and rescued you from your predicament, took you to his home and later — considerably later, I fear, Miss Fenton — sent you back in his car to the school. I am recapitulating these details that there may be no doubt about the manner of their occurrence. Up to this point, you will perceive, I am accusing you of nothing worse than folly and poor judgment. I wish to be scrupulously just."

"Do you?" flashed Sally June's heart. "You mean you want to be scrupulously hard — to think the worst."

But again her lips were silent.

## *April and Sally June*

Miss Bainbridge worked on firmly to her climax.

“ The person who — er — rescued you was, by name, Douglas Kincaid.”

It was as if she said, “ The person who rescued you was, by name, the devil.”

“ All this is in accordance with the facts, Miss Fenton? ”

“ Quite,” agreed Sally June steadily.

“ Very well. Later, on going into the matter of the circumstances of your regrettable misadventure, I made certain definite stipulations as to your future conduct, stipulations that were virtually a command. Will you kindly repeat here, in the presence of Mr. Hartley, what those stipulations were? ”

“ You requested — commanded, if you prefer — that I should have nothing whatever to do with Mr. Kincaid, that I was not even to write him a note of thanks for his kindness.”

Sally June's head was still high and her voice firm. But her heart was heavy and cold, cold as a stone. She could see only too well where all this was leading.



## *April and Sally June*

“ Exactly,” seconded Miss Bainbridge ponderously. “ In issuing these orders, if you like to call them that, I was acting, not only entirely within my rights as Principal of Hannah Barr, but also in accordance with wisdom and propriety. Douglas Kincaid, as I told you then, and, as the events of the past few days have amply proved, if one needed proof, is not a fit person for a young woman to associate with. My wishes were quite clear to you at the time, Miss Fenton ? ”

“ Quite,” said Sally June again.

Miss Bainbridge shot a glance in the direction of H. G. Hartley, a glance that said plainly, “ You see. I did my whole duty by this misguided young person. No blame whatever attaches to me in the matter.”

H. G. Hartley coughed deprecatingly. But he did not, in the least deprecate this long drawn out torture of the white cheeked young person, standing there before them. Indeed, he would have liked to see her more humbled. It satisfied some primitive instinct of cruelty within him, brought curious balm to his own

## *April and Sally June*

still remembered smart of injured vanity to see Sally June brought to the bar. He had said that the girl should pay. She was paying.

His returning glance to Miss Bainbridge said quite distinctly, "Certainly. Certainly. Your hands are quite clean, positively speckless. I grant that fully."

"That being the case," went on Miss Bainbridge, satisfied that she had received her due meed of praise, "it was plainly both your duty and to your advantage, Miss Fenton, to obey my wishes. Did you obey them?"

The speaker bored into Sally June, as Sally June had seen her bore into the consciousness of a girl, suspected of having used a forbidden lip stick, or cheated at an examination.

"I didn't deliberately disobey, Miss Bainbridge. It happened that Mr. Kincaid was at Miss Pringle's the following Sunday when I went there. I had tea with him and Miss Serena and later he walked over to the car line with me. The whole thing was entirely accidental."

"Indeed! I wish I could believe that, Miss

## *April and Sally June*

Fenton," drily. "The coincidence seems a little too far fetched to be coincidence. Moreover, when you were seen to board the car, having parted from your escort, you were at least a mile nearer town than Miss Pringle's home."

So! The magenta hat, at last!

"I missed one car," explained Sally June. "We walked on a little way, until the next overtook us."

Miss Fenton sniffed a little at that.

"I should say that it was your business not to have missed the car, under the circumstances. And could you not have dismissed the man?"

"I could, certainly. But he had been exceedingly kind to me. I saw no reason for being discourteous to him, especially as I had met him as a guest of Miss Serena's. She was one of my father's best friends and is a very dear friend to me. I trust her very much. I was sure — am still sure — that she would not have introduced Mr. Kincaid to me if she had not thought him fit to be introduced." Sally

## *April and Sally June*

June's tone was spirited. For the moment at least, she was all on the defensive — for Douglas Kincaid.

“ You infer that you would accept Miss Pringle's judgment rather than mine? ” Miss Bainbridge frowned and her voice sounded less judicial, sharper.

“ I am sorry, Miss Bainbridge. But I am afraid I have to say I do. Miss Serena is a very old friend, and a very — wise one.”

“ H-mp! A foolish, sentimental old maid! ” snapped Miss Bainbridge. “ But that's neither here nor there. The main point is you were bound to obey my wishes as Principal of Hannah Barr and you deliberately disobeyed them.”

“ Not deliberately, Miss Bainbridge,” corrected Sally June. “ I have told you how it happened. My meeting Mr. Kincaid was entirely unexpected and unsought.”

“ And you can swear that you have not seen him again? ” Boring process firmly applied.

“ I have seen him again. On Saturday when Miss Serena sent for me, being very ill,

## *April and Sally June*

he was there, had been there practically all night. She would have died if he had not got the doctor there when he did."

"H—mm! He seems to have developed into a champion life saver," sardonically. "And may I ask, did he stay there, at Miss Pringle's all day?"

"Not all day. A part of it."

"And were you alone with him?"

A flame of color rushed into Sally June's pale cheeks, making them suddenly as vividly scarlet as the geraniums in Miss Bainbridge's window. Seeing it, old H. G. leered maliciously. So the girl was not such a little prude as she seemed. Miss Bainbridge also perceived the flame of scarlet and drew her own conclusions.

Sally June bowed her head in silent assent to the query. If only she were free to hurl defiance in the faces of these two, the self righteous Miss Bainbridge, the hateful H. G. with his flabby hands and his pig eyes! If only she could tell them that she and Douglas Kincaid were engaged, that she had a right to

## *April and Sally June*

be with him, that nobody had any right to keep them apart! But how could she say these things when Mary Muldane was with him, when he had apparently forgotten the very existence of Sally June Fenton, when even at their happiest moment, he had talked only of love, never of marriage? Let happen what must, her lips were sealed. Pride forbade her to justify herself, to claim her right to freedom of action.

“ I see from your guilty look that you were alone with him, Miss Fenton. Even as poor Miss Serena was lying so ill, you were letting him make love to you, I fear. You cannot deny it. Considering the kind of man he is, who knows how far he went with — ”

But Miss Bainbridge had over stepped the boundary. Sally June's eyes blazed. She flung discretion to the four winds of heaven.

“ You have no right to make such vile insinuations,” she flung at the Principal. “ You have no right to pry into what does not concern you. As I have told you I failed to obey you implicitly because of circumstances



## *April and Sally June*

which forbade. I am sorry for that but I could not help it. But I will not remain in a place where such things as you have just implied are imputed to me or any friend of mine. I resign my position in Hannah Barr here and now. You will no doubt be able to get Miss Emma Dyer to take over my classes. You can give out that I have been called home by illness in the family. I—I shall be leaving at once.”

And fighting hard to keep back the tears that would come, Sally June turned on her heel and left Miss Bainbridge and H. G. Hartley to digest the situation as best they might.

Miss Bainbridge stared blankly at the closed door through which her Instructress in English Literature and Rhetoric had passed. She had a queer, wrong side up feeling, as if she had been, by some mysterious process, put in the place of the transgressor by the very person whose transgressions she had been seeking conscientiously and painstakingly to expose. Instead of having permitted herself, meek, chastened, humble, to be asked to resign

## *April and Sally June*

her post in Hannah Barr, Sally June Fenton had flung her resignation boldly in the face of the Principal and the First Trustee, even taking the initiative in providing a decent pretext for her departure and suggesting a substitute. Such reversal of the proper order of things was distinctly upsetting. Sally June Fenton had passed out of the scene, rather the victor than the vanquished.

It did not help the Principal's complacency, either, to perceive that H. G. Hartley was looking at her with something rather like a grin of malicious amusement. As a matter of fact, H. G. was a bit amused. He was not over fond of Miss Bainbridge. She was too dominant a person, too self reliant, too little disposed to grant the inherent superiority of the male sex over the female. He rather enjoyed seeing her disconcerted, flouted, out and out, by a young chit like Sally June Fenton. He almost forgave Sally June her offence toward himself in satisfaction over the Principal's momentary undoing.

"It would seem, Miss Bainbridge," he re-

marked with suavity, "that the matter about which I called has adjusted itself automatically. I came to ask your opinion as to whether we were justified in keeping in our employ a teacher who kept rural rendezvous with a somewhat notorious personage like Douglas Kincaid. It seems the question does not arise. The young woman has — er — quite decisively — removed herself."

Miss Bainbridge had by now recovered something of her equipoise.

"She removed herself, as you call it," she remarked grimly, "because she was well aware that I should insist upon her going at once. While I am Principal of Hannah Barr no breath of scandal shall be allowed to touch the school. We cannot afford it. Our teachers must be above suspicion. Miss Fenton is, by her own admission, a rebel against authority. Moreover she has obviously permitted liberties to this man, whom we all know to be no better than he should be. She is evidently inclined to laxity of conduct. Probably she is the kind of girl who permits any man to kiss

her." The last spoken with the air of conscious rectitude of the practically un-kissed.

H. G. Hartley's cheek tingled reminiscently.

"Oh, come now, Miss Bainbridge. We mustn't make too sweeping assertions. The girl may not be as — er — lax, as you believe."

Miss Bainbridge pursed her lips dubiously.

"I trust you are right," she conceded. "One must be as charitable as possible. No doubt it is merely a case of a foolish and inexperienced young girl's infatuation for a fascinating and unscrupulous much older man. Personally I have always liked the girl. She is one of the best teachers we ever had, splendid in her class work and commanding the respect and affection of the young ladies outside of the class room. I regret losing her. By the way, I think it is only right to keep the matter as quiet as possible. I wish to harm her no more than she has harmed herself."

Sally June had been wrong in her fierce young judgment. Miss Bainbridge really did wish to be just, and according to her limited understanding and light, she was.

## *April and Sally June*

“ I trust the truth will not reach Professor Parkes,” she added. “ I hear he is anxious to marry her. Certainly she could not do better than to marry a steady, excellent young man like that. She would be most fortunate, especially considering this unlucky escapade of hers. She will find it hard, I fear, to get another position. We cannot, of course, give her a recommendation.”

H. G. Hartley puffed out his cheeks and pursed his lips, a performance that made him look more like a pig than ever, adding to the effect of his eyes.

“ The way of the transgressor,” he observed sententiously, “ is indeed, hard.”

“ Precisely,” agreed Miss Bainbridge in high approval of this excellent pronouncement.

Meanwhile upstairs, the “transgressor,” with dry, burning eyes and hands like ice, was packing her small possessions. She was not angry nor frightened nor resentful nor crushed. She wasn’t anything. Emotion — all emotion — was, for the moment squeezed

## *April and Sally June*

out of her. She was just an empty rind. She was not sure she ever would be anything else again as long as she lived. All capacity for feeling seemed to have died in her. If Hallie Gerrard had stuck a pin in her she would probably have not known it.

It was Hallie who was vociferous in grief, tearful and scared and horror-struck by the calamity which had befallen her friend. She flew about like a frightened bird, thinking she was helping Sally June to pack, but really far more of a hindrance than a help, scarcely ever putting anything in its rightful place.

“ But Sally June, what will you do? Your aunt will make an awful fuss, won’t she, when she knows? ” Hallie stood absent-mindedly unrolling a pair of silk stockings as she asked the question.

“ She won’t know, not if I can help it. I’m not going back to Aunt Luella. I’d rather starve. She’d lay it all to my mother — say it was in the blood, that I was bound to go wrong. I think I’d want to murder her. I’m not going home. That’s that.”



## *April and Sally June*

“But where are you going? What will you do?” wailed Hallie.

“I am going to Miss Serena first of all. She will be glad to have me. Only, I can’t stay even there — very long. I — I couldn’t bear it.”

Sally June rammed a wad of newspaper with somewhat vicious vigor into the toe of a satin dance slipper. It didn’t seem at the moment that she could ever feel like dancing again. The slippers seemed to belong to another world — a world Sally June Fenton had left forever behind her.

“Oh, I know.” Hallie wiped her wet eyes with one of the silk stockings. “Places we’ve been happy in are sacred. You can’t bear to go back to them when the happiness has passed. As long as I live I hope I’ll never see a little glade in the woods at twilight, with sun glinting through the leaves, and dogwood, white and starry, all around and violets at my feet. That was the way it was last Saturday, Sally June. And he read poetry to me — Sonnets from the Portuguese —. I never, never

## *April and Sally June*

want to hear them 'again. Oh, Sally June, isn't it awful to be so unhappy — you and I — the two of us. I can't bear it, can you?"

"Yes," said Sally June stoically. "I can bear it. I've got to. One can bear anything — when one gets used to it."

As she spoke she carefully folded the little gray frock, the "Puritan frock" which had disputed for mastery with the Pan in her eyes. Pan had won and there was ruin all around her. Even the little gray frock did not hurt her just now. But, by and by, Sally June knew that there would come a time when it would hurt her terribly, to touch it, to remember the happiness it had known one enchanted night. It was going to take some time to "get used" to things, Sally June thought.

Hallie was thinking over what she had just heard. Hallie was in the habit of taking nearly everything Sally June said as law and gospel.

"I wonder," she sighed. "I suppose we do get used to things. I thought Sunday I was just going to die when William told me we

## *April and Sally June*

couldn't ever have any more precious, wonderful hours together like Saturday in the woods. I thought my heart was broken. But maybe it wasn't broken at all. Maybe I just played with the idea of it's being broken because I liked to think of myself with a broken heart. But last night I enjoyed that peach shortcake just as much as if I hadn't had a broken heart and this morning I found myself singing a jazzy little song when I was taking my bath. Funny, isn't it, Sally June? "

Sally June admitted that it was funny. She was remembering Douglas and his tender, laughing cynicism. "Maybe she will enjoy having a broken heart for a bit. Girls do sometimes, don't they?" Did he think she too would enjoy a broken heart? Well, she wouldn't. She wasn't going to let her heart break. It was too costly. Douglas Kincaid wasn't worth it.

Hallie was rambling on, not even making a pretense of helping in the packing now.

"I've been thinking a lot, Sally June. I don't believe my love was half as big and deep

## *April and Sally June*

as I thought it was. It was just my vanity. I loved thinking I meant a lot to him, that he needed me, that I could help him when his wife couldn't, or wouldn't. And maybe it was partly vanity with him too. It pleased him to have me look up to him and be sorry for him. Men do like that sort of thing, don't they, Sally June? They love to play to the gallery, be a hero."

Sally June was silent, laying dainty underwear into the tray of her trunk.

Maybe some men were like that. The Reverend William was, no doubt. But not Douglas Kincaid. He never masqueraded as a hero, never strutted and demanded admiration and adulation. Why? Wasn't it because he was a real hero, didn't have to dress up like one, play the part, like a movie actor? Whatever had been snatched away from her, that remained. Whatever he was, he wasn't yellow. The little doctor had spoken truly about that. And yet? Wasn't he acting yellow this minute? Might he be a hero, physically, do doughty deeds, and yet remain, in other ways,

## *April and Sally June*

a coward, a renegade? Sally June tried to tell herself that she had brought his desertion upon herself by refusing him her kiss that night, sending him off hurt and disappointed. But had he not already deserted her by going to that other woman, the other woman whom he had under his roof this minute? “Yellow! Yellow! Oh, Douglas! How could you?” sobbed Sally June’s heart, suddenly beginning to feel again with terrible poignancy and pain.

Hallie required no answer. She was still pursuing her own line of thought not knowing where Sally June’s had taken her.

“One thing was no fake anyway. He is unhappy and lonely — that’s why he tries to fill his life in with — with other things — things like me.” Hallie laughed a little ruefully. “Oh, I know I haven’t been the only one. There’s been a regular procession of my predecessors — perfectly harmless, platonic affairs, but always with pretty girls.” Hallie stopped and looked at herself in the mirror. “I am pretty, Sally June, and he did like me. But he didn’t love me. He doesn’t love Dolly

## *April and Sally June*

either. He married her because she had lots of money. She was crazy over him, in the beginning. That was why she threw Douglas over. It wasn't because of that affair with Mary Muldane. She had broken off the engagement before they ever went on that house party though people here didn't know it. Maybe it was that that made Douglas reckless. He cared a lot for her — Dolly. I suppose after she jilted him he didn't care much what he did."

Sally June was listening now, had stopped packing. So it had been like that. Dolly had played fast and loose with him first, left him hurt, disillusioned. "Sometimes love is taken away from us and we feel as if we had lost everything." Queer how she remembered every word Douglas Kincaid had ever said to her! First to worship a mother who never let him count with her at all and then to love a woman and be jilted by her for the sake of his own younger brother! Her heart for a moment was full of pity. And in this stage of affairs, when, no doubt, as Hallie said, it



## *April and Sally June*

didn't matter much what he did, having already lost everything he cared for, he had met Mary Muldane, who even now, they said, was beautiful beyond most women, a Mary Muldane, then young, full of fire and passion. Could one blame him if he strayed from the path of stern virtue? For a moment Sally June thought not. And then she remembered. Mary Muldane had been married. A man who would persuade — or let himself be persuaded — to run off with — a woman who was another man's wife, a man under whose roof he was being entertained, whose trust he enjoyed! Yellow! Yellow! Again Sally June came back to her inexorable verdict. John Knox was in the ascendancy within her. Pan was banished.

“How do you know?” she asked of Hallie.

“How do you know she jilted him — first?”

“William told me. It is funny. Even when he was most disturbed at Douglas's ordering him to keep away from me, William never had a word but good to say for Douglas. You wouldn't believe it, Sally June. But I

## *April and Sally June*

am sure he really admires him. I'm sure I don't know why."

"How wonderful! To be admired by William Morrisson!" Sally June's lips were a little scornful. She had gone back to her packing now, was all but finished at her task.

"Don't be sarcastic, Sally June. It's not a bad thing when a younger brother admires an older one. I should think you would be glad somebody did."

"Can it matter who admires him? I certainly don't."

Hallie looked wistfully at her friend. She knew there was a deep hurt in her else she wouldn't have spoken so.

"Sally June, don't you think you'll feel differently, by and by, when it's all farther off? You're so close to it all now, you've been hurt so dreadfully, no wonder you are bitter. But later — maybe — you'll forgive him."

"Possibly," said Sally June, turning the key in the lock of her trunk. "Now then, that's done. Will you do something for me?"

## *April and Sally June*

“Of course, anything.” Hallie was all eagerness to serve.

“Go down stairs and call up Arthur Parkes. Ask him if he can come and get me and take me out to Miss Serena’s.”

“Tonight! Sally June! You are not going tonight!”

“Why not? My trunk is packed. You can have it sent out tomorrow. There’s no reason for staying. Do you think I want lingering farewells and explanations tomorrow?”

“No. Of course not. Oh, Sally June, I can’t bear to have you go. I’ll miss you so.” Hallie’s quick tears were already brimming again at the idea of parting.

“I’ll write. You can come and see me. Do go now, Hallie, and get Arthur. There’s a dear.”

Twenty minutes later, Sally June dressed in her neat dark blue suit and small blue hat with a brave scarlet feather, stepped into Professor Parkes’s car and, while Hallie Gerrard waved goodbye from the side walk, was rapidly whisked away.

## *April and Sally June*

These were exciting phenomena to the watchful eyes of some of the young ladies whose windows happily for their curiosity overlooked the street.

There were those who insisted that Sally June and the Professor were eloping, a theory fascinating but somewhat difficult of credence. People did not elope right under other people's noses. Nor was there any reason for eloping when nobody had any objections to a marriage. It was well known that Professor Parkes was regarded with favor and anyway Miss Sally June was over twenty-one and could marry anybody she liked, when she liked, have a perfectly sweet wedding if she wanted to, with bridesmaids and everything. There was no sense to an elopement. Moreover Professor Parkes wasn't at all an eloping sort of man. One could tell that just to look at him. He was near sighted and his hair was awfully thin. Men like that hadn't the spunk to run away with a girl. They were much too proper. Much more likely he was just taking Miss Sally June to a party, a masquerade,

## *April and Sally June*

maybe, or somewhere that there was going to be theatricals, so she would have to change, which would account for the suit case.

It was not until the next morning that the young ladies discovered with dismay and lamentations that Miss Sally June had left the school, for good, on account of the illness of her aunt. One of the Dyer sisters, Miss Emma, the little one that squinted and wore such frightfully old fashioned tight clothes, all boned and scrunched in, was going to take her place. Fancy being taught spring poems by Miss Emma, who was sixty if a day and a little deaf! It was just awful the way they were going to miss Miss Sally June. And to think nobody had had a chance to say goodbye or bring her flowers or anything. Her aunt's sickness must have been frightfully sudden and serious. Miss Hallie looked as if she had cried half the night. Her eyes were as red as anything. No wonder. It was just sickening, losing Miss Sally June like that.

Certainly Sally June had looked more than a little sick herself, sitting beside the faithful

## *April and Sally June*

Arthur, the night before, telling him her whole wretched story from beginning to end, while he listened with attentive ears and deep sympathy. No matter how it hurt one's pride, Arthur had to be told. You couldn't simply swear in a knight errant in your behalf and leave him in utter ignorance of what all the trouble was about. You had to be honest. At least, Sally June had to be. It seemed about all she had left.

“Sally June, darling, you've got to marry me, do you hear?” he burst out when the whole sad tale was out. “It will get you out of this miserable mess and put a stop to the talk if there is any. I've had an offer to go to the University of California. You needn't ever see any of these people here again. We'll be married right away and go out there in June. Oh, Sally June, dear, won't you? I swear I'll do everything in the world to make you happy — make you forget all this and especially that damned — ”

“Arthur!” Sally June put up a protesting hand. “Don't, please don't damn Doug-



## *April and Sally June*

las. Either there is a terrible mistake or — or he doesn't need damning. He has damned — himself."

"But, dear, how can there be any mistake? There is no doubt in the world that the woman is there with him. And he was — forgive me, Sally June — he was her lover, even while her husband was alive. How can you love a man like that, a man who comes home drunk — so drunk he has to be helped into his own house, a man who, by your own tale, has treated you abominably?"

Sally June sadly shook her head.

"I'm sure I don't know how I can. But I do. I love him terribly. I think I always shall. I suppose I have no pride."

"No pride. Sally June! You're the proudest girl I know."

"Proud!" Sally June looked at him doubtfully. "Do you mean vain?"

"Vain! I should say not. I mean proud. Vanity is a little quality, the trait of a small mind. Pride is a big quality, the trait of a big one. Your pride is real, Sally June. Real

## *April and Sally June*

and big. It won't let you give yourself to a man you can't trust or respect."

Sally June's eyes strayed, focussed on a star.

Arthur was right, part right at any rate. She would not give herself. Her pride was big enough to keep her from doing that at least. But was there much difference between giving yourself and giving your love? And her love was already given, was not to be taken back. As Hallie Gerrard had said, one couldn't love or unlove — to order.

Falteringly she tried to explain this to the man at her side.

"But, Sally June, dear. You'll get over that. You can't love him so desperately. You've seen him so little."

"That doesn't matter. My father and mother loved each other the very first hour they met. And I — I loved Douglas the same way. It is dreadful to be telling you this, Arthur. It nearly kills me, it hurts my pride so. I have that much pride anyway. But I've got to try to make you understand, for your own

## *April and Sally June*

sake as well as mine. I can't marry you. Especially when I'm in this hateful mess — being fired and everything."

Arthur clutching at straws, chose to take this as remotely hopeful for his cause. He assured her swiftly that her being in the mess was all the more reason for marrying her and at once. Besides she hadn't been fired. She had fired herself.

Sally June giggled a bit hysterically at this.

"It was a case of beating her to it," she confessed. "If I hadn't fired myself she would have fired me. She was just drawing a deep breath to do it."

"Old tyrant!" raged Arthur fiercely, very fiercely for him.

"Oh, but she isn't really, Arthur. Let's be fair. In a way she was perfectly right. I did disobey her orders. She had to fire me. I don't blame her for that. I only blame her for — for the things she said."

Sally June's cheeks burned again remembering.

"Don't worry, Arthur," she begged. "I

## *April and Sally June*

am not worrying myself — not really. When a person is not in the wrong — when she's just been pushed into the ditch, so to speak, not stepped into it of her own will, she is bound to get out again. I won't let them crush me or frighten me or give any of the horrid complexes the psycho-analysts are always talking about. I have — What is it the poem says? — 'an unconquerable soul.' I can't be vanquished unless I do something myself that is mean or cheap or cruel or wrong. Dad used to tell me that and I believe it. People — things — circumstances — can't conquer me. Not the real me."

"Bravo, Sally June! No more they can. You'll come out on the top of the heap, never fear. But, oh, my dear, if you knew how I wanted to stand between you and everything hard and cruel and hurting, so you wouldn't have to fight your way through to victory!"

Sally June put out her hand and let it rest an instant on Arthur's knee.

"I do know, Arthur," she said gently. "I shall always think of you as a very true and

## *April and Sally June*

gallant knight, *sans peur et sans reproche*. I'll always, always be grateful to you for standing by me so beautifully. And I'll always be sorry that I have to hurt and disappoint you by not giving you what you want. As for fighting, I am afraid I have to do my own. Everybody does in this world, I think. Oh, there are Miss Serena's lights. Isn't it good, good that I've got her? I am so tired. I believe I am going to sleep tonight in spite of everything."

And she did. Hardly had she settled down in Miss Serena's cool, linen sheets before she was off into deep, dreamless sleep. But perhaps she wouldn't have slept so quickly or so well, if Miss Serena, acting on a hint from Arthur, had not had the nurse mix her a dose of bromide. Arthur knew that Sally June simply had to sleep. The violin string stretched too taut must inevitably snap at last. And the violin string which was Sally June was all but at the breaking point that night.

But if there was sleep at last for Sally June tonight, there was none for Arthur. Arthur

## *April and Sally June*

had to thresh out the whole miserable business in his mind and come to a conclusion as to what he must do, what it was best for Sally June that he should do.

It was characteristic of him that in the long vigil of the night while he drove his car on and on through the still, star lit night, not knowing or caring much where he went, he resolutely put out of his mind his own pain and disappointment. Not once did he stop to be sorry for himself though he was well aware that his dearest dream was his no longer, that no matter whether Sally June married her recreant lover or not she would never marry him. That hope was dead. Sally June would always love him, as she would have loved a brother had she had one, with perhaps a little warmer affection than she would have given that brother, because he was to be remembered as her knight, “*sans peur et sans reproche*,” and ready to do battle for her sake. But it was a cold thing to be a Bayard or a Percival. It was a different sort of love that Arthur Parkes was man enough to want. And be-



## *April and Sally June*

cause he was such a man he thought not of himself but of Sally June, whose happiness was at stake.

But what was the best way to save her happiness? Arthur was not sure. It was a vexed problem.

Should he go to Douglas Kincaid, force him willy nilly to return to Sally June whose love he had snatched only to throw it back in her face as a thing of no moment? Of what use? Sally June would accept no lover on such compulsory terms. He knew her pride too well. And could she ever be content, even if the man went back gladly, penitently, humbly, like a whipped cur, to know he was what he was, a vacillator and a weakling, not worth a woman's starry love and faith? Again the answer seemed to be no. Better no love at all than a love that must forever make excuses, see itself dragged in dust of disillusionment.

What then? Should he try heroic measures, horsewhip the man, order him to get out of town by the first train or be hounded out by public opinion, tell him his life wouldn't be

## *April and Sally June*

worth a German mark if he dared to show his face in Cameronville again? If there was anything absurd in the idea of the slender, stoop shouldered professor, horse whipping and brow beating the stalwart, war trained veteran, Douglas Kincaid, Arthur did not perceive it. His spirit was mighty, because of it and his love for Sally June, his strength was indeed, as the strength of ten, in his own mind at least. But again of what avail? What could it advantage Sally June that the man she loved should be punished, abased? Nothing whatever, obviously nothing.

All these things were but blind alleys, leading nowhere. Was there nothing, nothing he could do for Sally June? By the time his flivver was headed back to town and a faint, pale glow of coming dawn showed over the hills to eastward, Arthur had about come to the reluctant conclusion that nothing was indeed the answer. Sally June had perhaps been right in saying that she had to do her own fighting. With all the will in the world to serve there seemed nothing he could do to

## *April and Sally June*

make the crooked places straight for her, give her her heart's desire.

And what was that heart's desire? Nothing more or less than a miracle. It was that Douglas Kincaid should rise up unscathed by all these terrible accusations that had been aimed at him like poisoned arrows, that he should prove after all to be the man Sally June had believed him, still at moments believed him, in spite of everything. And could this be? Sadly Arthur Parkes thought it could not.

Why he did it he scarcely knew, but Arthur found himself driving the car straight to The Pines, though with no definite plan of what he was going to do when he got there. Something impelled him to go, to see Douglas Kincaid himself, form his own impression of the man Sally June loved.

The sun was already bursting through the mist when he turned the car up the driveway between the tall pines. A rabbit scuttled across the path. The solemn great dog walked majestically down the steps. A far off clock

## *April and Sally June*

from the town chimed the hour of six. An absurd, unconscionable hour to arrive at the house of a strange man! Why had he come? Arthur had no idea. He only knew that he was driven by some urge, felt vaguely that he was here somehow or other for Sally June's sake.

Another car already stood before the house, an expensive French affair, which he seemed to recognize dimly but not really to place. He dismounted from his own car, walked up the steps, the great dog at his heels, not unfriendly but in definite surveillance. The front door stood slightly ajar. Through it came the sound of a woman's voice, high pitched, bitter edged, a voice strange, yet oddly familiar, too.

“Why am I here? I came to ask the same thing of you. But you needn't tell me. I know. You always loved her — she was the only one you ever did love — of us all. Even then you loved yourself best. You left her to pay the price of your double folly alone. No, not alone. Somebody else stepped into the

breach, paid your share. You coward! You hypocrite! You parlor idol, beloved by silly school girls! To think I gave up a man like him for such as you. I have been well paid. Bah! Do you wonder I'd never bear a child to you? I found you out too soon."

Cautiously Arthur retreated. These were harsh words, whoever was speaking and to whom. He did not wish to hear more.

But his step resounded on the stone coping. In an instant the door was flung wide open. To his utter amazement it was Dolly Morrisson who stood before him, white lipped, furious, a woman obviously beside herself with passion.

And just behind her stood her husband, William Morrisson. It was he then upon whom this virago like outburst was descending. No one else was visible. The two were here alone, at six o'clock in the morning, in Douglas Kincaid's house.

Dolly stared at the newcomer in astonishment equal to his own.

"You! What are you doing here at such

## *April and Sally June*

an hour? Are you all mad? Does she bewitch every one of you? He — ” She pointed at her husband — “ He has been here all night.”

William Morrisson stirred, opened his mouth to speak. But she stopped him with a commanding gesture.

“ Oh, don’t bother to lie. There have been enough lies. You pretended to come to see Douglas I know. But you really came because you couldn’t keep away from Mary Muldane. And you? ” She wheeled fiercely round on Arthur. “ I suppose you have come to see her too. She seems to affect you all that way,” she flung at him, driven to frenzy in the stress of some ferocious, long repressed emotion.

Arthur stepped over the threshold.

“ I do not know Mrs. Muldane, if that is the she of whom you are speaking. I came because I wished to see Douglas Kincaid. Where is he? ”

“ Douglas? He is up stairs in bed. Yesterday they thought he was dying. I believe now they say he will get well. I don’t know. I



## *April and Sally June*

have not seen him. Ask Mary Muldane. She has been with him, night and day.”

Arthur stared at the speaker, repelled yet moved oddly to pity. She had been a fair, pretty girl. She was still fair but no longer pretty. Some canker of the mind had gnawed at her beauty, made her old and ugly, before her time. Everything good, it seemed, had been laid at her feet, wealth, opportunity, position, power to command ease, travel, what not. Yet any negro slut in the hovels on the edge of the town was happier, got more out of life than Dolly Morrisson. Why? Were these things that he had heard against his will the answer? He started to turn and go but did not. Mary Muldane was coming down the stairs.

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## *Chapter IX*

SALLY JUNE too had been awake with the dawn. She had slept well, woke refreshed, made quick again with youth and vigor and hope. She was too young to know despair in the morning. She peeped out the window. The sky was already faintly rose tinted toward the east. Surely, surely life could not be so starkly hideous as it had looked last night. Already last night, all those other miserable nights and days, began to seem a nightmare, something that could not possibly have been.

Sally June lay very still in her little, white bed and closed her eyes.

“O God!” she prayed. “Give Douglas back to me. I don’t care if I don’t marry him. Don’t bother about that. But don’t let him be what they say he is. Not for my sake, God. I don’t matter. But for his. I know he never meant — not to be good. He did love me, God. I know he did.”

## *April and Sally June*

And then very strangely, out of the pink dawn, Sally June heard a voice, a voice that called her name, quite clearly.

“Sally June! Sally June! Mademoiselle April. Sally June! Come! Come!”

Startled and with quick beating heart, Sally June sat up in bed. She heard the voice no longer but she had heard it. She knew she had. It wasn't a dream. Douglas had called her. He wanted her, bade her come to him, in the April dawn.

Hastily she sprang out of bed, commenced to dress. Strange, she wasn't unhappy any more, felt as if she never could be again. She was happy. She felt queerly light like a disembodied spirit. All the things that had crushed her down last night weighed on her no longer. She could almost have sung with the just waking birds. Life was good. And love — yes, love was good, too. You could trust it, just like God. It was God.

Dressed, she sat down at the quaint, little rosewood desk, to pen a note for Miss Serena.

## *April and Sally June*

“Darling Miss Serena,” she wrote. “Thanks a thousand times for being so good to me last night. I slept wonderfully and now — this morning — I am going to Douglas. He called me. The rest is all a horrid dream. I don’t understand what has happened. I don’t understand anything but I woke up believing in him, just the way you do, and I’m so happy. I love him and I have to go.

Sally June ”

This missive she tucked, folded, under Miss Serena’s door. Then she went down the stairs, softly unbolted the outer door and stepped out into April. She feared nothing this morning — not even Mary Muldane. She was armed with love.

But we left Mary Muldane coming down the stairs. Arthur was not much given to remembering poetry, except it be couched in Greek or Latin. Seeing Mary Muldane coming toward him, he was moved to recall a singing line of English verse:

“She walks in beauty, like the night.”

## *April and Sally June*

He had spent his own night under starry skies and he still recalled their beauty, felt their kinship with the beauty of the woman who approached, her loveliness so beyond description that it held him motionless, awe struck.

She wore a long, loose robe of black velvet, almost sleeveless, cut low in the neck, revealing an exquisite white throat, a string of creamy pearls. Her skin was warmly radiant, though without a suggestion of rose in it. Her hair, lustrous, blue black, swept back from her noble forehead in great, loose waves. Her eyes, so dark, that one hardly knew whether they were midnight blue or actually black, were shaded by long and very thick black lashes, slightly upcurling. There was dignity and poise as well as an amazing grace to her movements. There was no coquetry, no archness in her manner. If this were a siren, a woman whose beauty drove men mad, she was a singularly austere and aloof one. She looked, in the dim light, rather a Madonna than a Magdalene.

## *April and Sally June*

“Must you disturb him with your loud talk?” she asked in a rich, deep toned contralto voice, addressing Dolly Morrisson. “You are Mrs. Morrisson, are you not? I have not seen you for a long time but I have not forgotten you. Why are you here? Douglas did not send for you. For that matter he did not send for him, either.” Her gaze swept William Morrisson at this point. Professor Parkes she scarcely seemed to see at all.

“I came to see what he was up to. And he — need you ask? — he came because you were here.” Dolly’s tone was still fierce but, to do her justice she had managed to lower it in deference to the sick man up stairs. “What do you suppose he cares for Douglas?” she sneered.

“You are right,” said Mary Muldane. “He cares nothing for Douglas. None of you ever did — not even his own mother. And he he is worth a million Williams — always has been. He — ” a contemptuous wave of her hand indicated William — “He let them scrimp and save and spend all the money there



## *April and Sally June*

was on his education, leaving Douglas what was left over, which was precisely nothing. And then, as if that were not enough, he came on the scene and made love to you, right under Douglas's nose, because he thought it would be mighty convenient to have your fortune himself. And then, just on the eve of his marriage and his ordination, he got into a sordid scrape with a woman and let Douglas bear the brunt of it all. And that's your minister of the gospel! "

Nobody interrupted her. She went on relentlessly.

"Between you all, you crucified Douglas. His mother begged him, on her knees, to save William at his own expense. She nailed him to the cross with her tears. And you— " She wheeled round on Dolly. "He did it for you, too. You stood by and let him do it, never turning a hair. None of you had the slightest compassion on Douglas. You accepted his sacrifice of things that meant most to him as if the gift were nothing."

"No, Mary. You are wrong there." Wil-

liam's voice rang out with unexpected force and clarity. "Dolly didn't know — not till afterward."

Again Mary Muldane's glance rested on the other woman. There was a little pity mingled with the disdain in her eyes now. So Dolly had not known. The family had kept the secret well.

"I see. You simply accepted Cameronville's senseless chatter, the tale of a stupid old maid and a lying servant. No doubt you were too much enamoured of your precious William at the moment to look too deeply. I must confess to a little curiosity as to how you learned the truth. Certainly Douglas never told you, nor his mother. She kept the secret for her darling William's sake and it killed her as well it might, knowing what it did to Douglas. Murray — my husband — and I were sworn to secrecy by Douglas himself. Murray would have promised anything to make up to him for shooting him instead of William. Douglas stepped between them you know. That's how that happened. Murray

## *April and Sally June*

loved Douglas. There remains only William himself. And surely William never told you."

Dolly laughed, a bitter laugh, not pleasant to hear.

"Not William awake. William asleep. On our honeymoon."

"Oh! So that was it. Poetic justice with a vengeance."

"What right have you to talk?" blazed Dolly suddenly on the defensive for the husband whom, only a few minutes ago she had been vituperating so fiercely. "You spoke of a sordid affair with a woman. You were the woman. What right have you to sneer at him?"

Mary, still standing a step or two above the others on the stairs, folded her beautiful bare arms across her breast.

"None," she acknowledged calmly. "We were tarred with the same brush, he and I. I was a fool. Like you I was carried away by his beauty, his heavenly voice, his — kisses. Only I had the better reason. He really loved me — not just — my money."

*April and Sally June*

“Have you no shame?” shrilled Dolly.

Arthur moved toward the door. He had heard more than enough. But Mary Muldane stopped him with an imperious gesture.

“Wait. I don’t know who you are nor why you are here. But you have heard too much, not to hear more. You are — Cameronville. Let Cameronville hear the truth. It is high time.”

Then she turned back to Dolly, white and shivering with anger.

“Between us — your William and I — we broke the heart of a good man, a man big enough to forgive a faithless wife, and accept the fatherhood of a child not his own. You ask if I have no shame. I have worn shame like a crown of thorns for sixteen years.”

“Mary! You mean —?” It was William who uttered the broken words.

“Yes. Didn’t you know? Bettina is your daughter. But she will never know it — not if I can help it. That much need not be bruited abroad in Cameronville or elsewhere. Not for your sake or mine — for hers.”

## *April and Sally June*

Mary Muldane's dark eyes sought Arthur Parkes, representing Cameronville. He bowed in silent acknowledgment and pledge. He was glad he could do that much for her.

For an instant no one spoke. William dropped heavily in a chair, head sunk in his hands. Dolly stood, driving her nails into her palms in speechless, impotent rage. That woman, daring to say such things, bare such secrets, daring to look so regally beautiful while she did it, worse still, daring to look pure!

Mary Muldane did look pure. She was pure. Arthur understood that if Dolly didn't. She was pure because she had won her way back to purity, had been honest with herself and the man she had wronged. By remorse, by pain, by expiation, she had purged herself, most of all by work, pursued tirelessly, intensely, sacrificially. A woman still young, beautiful, tremendously vital, she had given up love and all its ways, not because she had not needed or wanted love, but because during long, lonely years of widowhood she had

## *April and Sally June*

willed to pay a debt to a mad moment of long ago. No wonder she stood there, more a Madonna than a Magdalene.

All this flashed through the mind of Arthur Parkes and underneath it ran another realization, a truth which was both glad and sad. All these things that had been said about Douglas Kincaid were false. For his mother's sake, for the sake of the woman who had heartlessly cast him aside for the *beaux yeux* of his younger brother, he had "crucified" himself, taken on another man's load of blame and shame. If this was true, what of these last few days? The man had been close to death. No matter how deeply he had cared for Sally June he had been powerless to go to her, to make a sign. And this beautiful Madonna of a woman had cared for him, brought him back to life, while Cameronville sneered and blasted his name and hers.

Sally June had been right to love this man. Perhaps love — real love — was always right, if one listened to its deep prompting. Certainly it was love that had led his own feet to

## *April and Sally June*

Douglas Kincaid's house this morning. Now he could go back to Sally June with the one gift she craved. If, in laying it at her feet, he obliterated the last vestige of his own hope, what matter? Sally June would be happy.

His gaze fell on William Morrisson, huddled in his chair, head still bowed in his hands.

"My God!" he heard him mutter. "A child. And I've wanted one more than anything in the world."

The two women heard the cry too, Mary Muldane, who had borne him a child, that another man's loyalty and tenderness had sheltered, Dolly, his wife, who had refused him children because of the smart of that old pain, to punish him for having loved another woman too well! They too both looked at him, and strangely, in the eyes of both was pity. After all they had both loved him once. One of them still did, though her bitter tongue goaded him like a lash.

Suddenly the Reverend William threw back his head.

"Listen to me, Mary — Dolly." There was



## *April and Sally June*

a flash of command in his manner. "Do you think I've gone unscathed all these years? Do you think I haven't paid either? Time and again I've made ready to put a bullet through my head."

Dolly made an impatient gesture.

"And why didn't you?" she mocked. "Because some sweet little school marms might have been shocked and grieved by your abrupt departure from a world you had made so pleasant for them? Always a gallery player, William. We know you."

But Mary Muldane who knew men and life so much better than Dolly looked gravely at William. She knew sincerity when she heard it speak. The man had suffered, deeper perhaps than one knew.

"Not always, Dolly, and not in this." His voice was weary but patient. "The pistol has been in my hand more than once. You ask why I didn't use it. The answer is—you. I had messed things up enough for you without that, leaving you a nasty scandal to muddle through alone. Another thing you don't

## *April and Sally June*

either of you understand. Mind you I am not whining, trying to throw off any blame I ought to bear. I'm through with that. But it was never my wish to shunt the weight of my wrong doing on Douglas. I meant to see it through myself. I'm not a coward. It was Douglas himself who made me leave things as Cameronville got them, garbled beyond recognition. His will was always stronger than mine. Is still. For our mother's sake, yes, for your sake, too, Dolly, because he loved you in those days and thought you loved me, he forced me to keep silent, let them think he was the transgressor, not I."

"The glorious fool!" murmured Mary Muldane. "No wonder he can write plays. It is a good name for a play itself."

"Yes, he is — a glorious fool — always has been. As quixotic as they make 'em. He bears the scar that ought to have been mine. But there has never been a moment all these years when I wouldn't gladly have changed places with him, given anything I had for his clean hands. It has poisoned everything —

## *April and Sally June*

my work, my life. I've kept my word to Douglas all this time, Dolly, for your sake. But now you've opened the door of the cage yourself. I am free. I am going to do what I've wanted to do for years, go up and work among the mountain people in Kentucky. There's work for a man there."

Dolly stared at her husband amazed.

"You are going to give up your church."

"I am. The church wouldn't have me when this gets out. And if it would I wouldn't stay. It is hard for you, Dolly. God knows I understand that. But you can divorce me, go your own way."

"But the money! You must have some of that — half," stammered Dolly.

He brought his fist down with a resounding thwack on the table.

"The money! Damn the money! I admit it did dazzle me at first. We had had such a hideous time pinching along on nothing and trying to keep up to the traditions of the family. But the thing I've envied Douglas most, next to his clear conscience, is the fact

*April and Sally June*

that he has made himself, didn't let a woman pay the way for him at every step. Your money has choked me. I have loathed it for years. I'll be thankful to be quit of it."

"Bravo!" cried Mary Muldane. "After all, you are a man, William. We weren't all mistaken about you when we loved you."

She held out her hand to him and gratefully he took it.

Dolly stood by watching them, a tear trickling down her faded cheek.

"I am sorry, William," she said humbly, very humbly for her. "I—I never meant it to choke you. Will you shake hands with me, too? Then I'll go. After the—the divorce—you can marry Mary—have—have your daughter."

"Good Lord, Dolly! You've got us all wrong. Mary doesn't want to marry me. She wouldn't marry me if I were the last man on earth. She doesn't love me."

"Doesn't she?" asked Dolly meekly, wondering. "I—I do."

## *April and Sally June*

“Dolly!” He drew both her hands in his.

“And if you don’t mind very much I think I’d like to go up in the mountains with you. Maybe there will be something for me, too, to do there. You don’t know how tired I get sometimes of never doing anything — not even having children, like other women, to fuss over.”

“My dear, I don’t deserve it but if you will come with me, I shall be very happy. We’ll start over together and start right.”

“Good for you two!” exclaimed Mary Muldane with real enthusiasm. “I’m proud of you both. You are something of a sport, too, Dolly Morrisson. You’ve got what Murray used to call ‘guts’ after all. By the way, now that we have exposed our most sacred and secret life histories for the benefit of this gentleman here, to whom I haven’t yet been introduced, suppose we go and have some breakfast. I am sure it is ready for us and we, for it.”

She smiled at Arthur but he shook his head.

## *April and Sally June*

“Thanks, not this morning. My name is Parkes — Arthur Parkes — and I should like to assure you all that so far as I am concerned Cameronville will be none the wiser for what I have heard this morning. There is just one exception I’d like to make though. There is a girl that Douglas Kincaid is engaged to. And she has the right to know some of these things. May I go and get her and bring her a little later?” He addressed Mary Muldane as, for the time being, the hostess at The Pines. “Her name,” he added, “is Sally June — Sally June Fenton.”

Mary Muldane’s eyes sparkled.

“Sally June! Sally June! June! Is there such a person?” she asked eagerly.

“Certainly, there is very much such a person.”

“Then, for the love of heaven, go get her quick. He has been calling for her all night. I didn’t know she was a girl. I thought she was part of the calendar. He’s been raving about April too, but that wasn’t so hard to understand. Just before he went to sleep just

## *April and Sally June*

now he settled down so peacefully, told me Sally June was coming. At least I understood the June part, though it didn't make sense. But if she's a girl and he's in love with her — well, go get her quick, that's all. She is the medicine he needs. Fly, Arthur Parkes, fly!"

And Arthur Parkes flew.

Ten minutes later he met Sally June, headed toward The Pines, looking happy, even elated, quite as if she had been present at the remarkable scene in which Arthur himself had involuntarily participated, though obviously she could know nothing whatever about it. He was mystified and amazed at her expression, at her being there at all.

"Sally June! What on earth are you doing here?" he demanded.

"I might ask the same of you," she retorted. "But I won't. I'm on my way to The Pines, to see Douglas. You were wrong, my dear. I haven't the smallest remnant of pride. I love him and I know he loves me. And the rest — well, the rest will just have to clear itself up, that's all."



## *April and Sally June*

“ Sally June, you are a wonder! Do you really believe in him, not knowing? ”

“ Yes,” said Sally June. “ I do. I am sure I don’t know why. I just do.”

“ Well, I know. You believe in him because he is all right — a glorious fool, as Mary Muldane just called him, but a man.”

“ Arthur!” Sally June’s eyes were starry. “ What do you mean? Where have you been? What have you heard? ”

“ Get in, Sally June. I was just coming for you. I’ll take you to The Pines and as we go I’ll tell you a little. The whole story is too big to get into ten minutes.”

Sally June got in.

Meanwhile, Dolly Morrisson and her husband and Mary Muldane went into the dining room and proceeded to eat breakfast, a curiously assorted group, all things considered, but oddly friendly, three “ good sports ” together. It had all been rather sensational and melodramatic. They were all tired, ready to relax and consume commonplace bacon and eggs and coffee.

## *April and Sally June*

The creak of a car brake sounded outside. Mary Muldane rose and went to look out the window.

“My word!” she murmured. “Our Mr. Parkes is a wonder worker. Where did he have her concealed? He is back already with — Is that Sally June?”

William and Dolly got up and peeked too. It was undoubtedly Sally June, looking in her white frock, like a bit of spring, blown in by an April wind.

“Well, thank Heaven! She looks nice enough even for Douglas Kincaid and that’s saying a whole lot. I’m going to speak to her, to see if she is as sweet as she looks.”

Mary vanished, leaving William and Dolly smiling.

“She is sweet,” said Dolly, “as sweet as she is pretty. I am glad Douglas is going to be happy after all these years. He deserves it, if ever a man did. Oh, William, I’ve been so jealous of girls — pretty, young ones like Sally June Fenton and Hallie Gerrard!”

William flushed.

## *April and Sally June*

“ I’ve been an awful fool, Dolly. But truly, it was partly your fault — the pretty girls. I would much rather have had you all along. But you shut yourself away, wouldn’t even give me friendship, comradeship. You despised me and you showed it. I had to salve my ego somehow.”

“ I didn’t despise you, William. I — I loved you. I’ve been a fool, too, my dear. But we are going to be happy now, aren’t we?”

And William, reaching for her hand, assured her that they were.

“ Sally June — Mary Muldane,” Arthur introduced the two out in the hall.

They looked at each other smiling. Mary held out her hand and Sally June took it.

“ I have been awfully stupid, Sally June,” apologized the older woman. “ I thought he had a calendar complex and it was you all the time that he wanted. He has been dreadfully sick. Ptomaine poison. I told him to cut out lobster. But he’s better now. And you will cure him. Run on up, my dear. Don’t let us

## *April and Sally June*

keep you. First door to the left at the head of the stairs."

Blushing Sally June laughed and ran on up.

Arthur Parkes and Mary Muldane looked at each other.

"She is perfect," sighed Mary. • "Oh, to be as young as that, and to have a man like Douglas desperately in love with you! I feel about a thousand years old. I know how the fellow felt in Shakespeare that wanted 'to sit upon the ground and tell sad stories of the deaths of kings'—and queens," she added whimsically.

Arthur smiled back but his smile was a little absent. He himself felt, if not a thousand, at least every one of his thirty three years. He was no longer a knight errant buoyed up by the knowledge that he was somehow serving his liege lady. He was merely little Professor Parkes, near sighted, stoop shouldered, getting bald fast.

Mary Muldane smiled at him. Perhaps, being a very wise lady, she saw the knight errant beneath the professor.

## *April and Sally June*

“ You are rather a good sport too, I see,” she said. “ Thanks so much for having your Sally June up your sleeve, though how you prestidigitated her up so fast, is beyond me. Won’t you stop and have breakfast now? ”

Arthur shook his head. He could not stay, thanks. He must be off. And in a minute he was gone.

“ So there’s that,” remarked Mary Muldane looking after him, sympathetically. “ So many Arthurs. So few Sally Junes. Not nearly enough to go around and the picturesque Douglasses always get them. You and I, Arthur, are — what’s left over, after the rest of them find happiness. And you don’t deserve to be a remnant. That’s the pity of it.”

Sally June had paused at the first door to the left at the head of the stairs. Then softly she opened the door, stepped over the threshold. Douglas lay very still in the big, old-fashioned fourposter bed, looking very gaunt and thin and fever flushed. Her heart almost stopped beating seeing him, so quiet, so help-

## *April and Sally June*

less, so obviously ill, he who was always so strong, so vigorous, so masterful. And she had hated him, or tried to hate him, for neglecting her silly, unimportant self. And he had been almost dying, lying here like this. She hadn't known. She ought to have known. She could not forgive herself. She tiptoed over to the bed. She felt no strangeness being here alone with him. He belonged to her. He was her man.

As if he felt her presence his lids lifted heavily. His eyes opened, flashed joy and amazement.

"Sally June! Sally June! Is it really you? I dreamed I called you and you came. But this isn't a dream. You are here, really. You're real, Sally June."

"Of course I am real and really here. Oh, my dear, you have been so sick. I didn't know."

He smiled a little, wanly.

"Rotten," he admitted. "Rotten sick. Rotten lobster. Mary warned me against it but I would eat it. Kiss me, Sally June. I

## *April and Sally June*

had a nightmare notion you were angry with me? Are you?"

"Not — not now," sighed Sally June. "I'm sorry, Douglas. I was hateful, hateful and unbelieving and — and jealous."

"Were you? That was a good sign anyway. Shows you care a little, Mademoiselle April. But you needn't have been jealous of Mary. If you had come down stairs with me as I wanted, I could have explained all that, in a jiffy. I'll explain now. I never meant to desert you, Sally June, my love."

"You needn't explain, Douglas. I know — know it was all right."

"But I want to explain, cantankerous midget. It was all about a play. My play. Mary wanted a certain part in it for Bettina, her daughter. And my manager, who is cantankerous but not a midget, wasn't sure she ought to have it, and wouldn't give it to her anyway without my say so. That was all there was to that. I had to go up to town anyway. Had to go and buy a ring for a girl I am going to marry, so I thought I might as well kill two



## *April and Sally June*

birds with one stone. I came pretty near being one of the birds.”

So that was all there had been to it and if she hadn't been so stuffy, so stupid and jealous, she might have been spared all this heart ache. Serve you right, Sally June. You deserved every thing you got, every bit.

“ I saw Mary, and we argued a bit about the part. I wasn't sure myself young Betty ought to have it. She's horribly young — not sixteen yet, though a clever minx and makes up to look twenty. So I told Mary I'd think it over and wire her. We had supper together she and I and the lobster. Only she had chicken à la king, instead of lobster, wise woman! By midnight I was plum sick. Only idea I had was to get back to The Pines and you, bad child though you were and hadn't kissed me goodbye. I shall make you pay for that with compound interest all your life, so you know what you are up against. In the excitement of getting my train the last minute, I clean forgot about wiring Mary though I had made up my mind to let her have her

## *April and Sally June*

way. It is quite the simplest thing to do in the long run, with Mary. But don't you fancy you are going to get away with murder, the way she does, young woman. I shall start right with you. I made the train but it was rather the deuce of a business getting home, I felt so darned sick, sicker every minute. They got me to bed and I haven't known much of what was happening since. I tried to make everybody grasp, in my more lucid intervals, that what I wanted was you but nobody understood. Mary came on down after me, raving mad at me for not keeping my promise about wiring. She found me sick and stayed to nurse me. She is amazingly good at it. She did it, all during the war, you know, in France. Broke her contracts and everything to do it. That's where I got to know her so well. We met over there."

Sally June looked at him rather intently.

"I don't mean we met for the first time, then," he added quickly. "I had known her years before, of course. Sally June, was that what it was all about? Had you heard that it

## *April and Sally June*

was Mary my name was mixed up with? Idiot that I was — I didn't think of that."

"Yes, they had told me. But I didn't know — until today — that it was your brother, not you, that was — well, that was Mary Muldane's lover."

Douglas stared at her in astonishment and a little in anger too.

"Who told you that?" he demanded sharply. "Nobody had the right."

Sally June laughed a little wearily.

"Now, see here, you aren't going to begin to bully me, the first minute, either. I'm going to start right too. You are what Mary Muldane called you — a dear, glorious fool. But you have no monopoly on glorious folly. Let William and Dolly have a try at it too. They have a right to, after all these years. It was they that told. They and Mary Muldane. And Arthur heard them and he told me — some of it."

"Arthur! Your professor chap! Good Lord, Sally June, how did he get in on it?"

"I'm not just sure," admitted Sally June.

## *April and Sally June*

“ But he did. Of course, he won’t tell anybody beside me. He thought I had a right to it after all I’d been through.”

It slipped out before she thought. Sally June hadn’t meant to tell Douglas Kincaid just then all she had been through. But it was too late. The damage was done.

He sat up in bed.

“ Sally June, what have they been doing to you while I’ve been lying here like a damned log? Tell me this minute. You are thinner. There are shadows under your eyes. Out with it. Have they made you suffer on my account? ” His tone was murderous. “ Off with their heads! ” was the implication.

“ Rather. Because I loved you and couldn’t bear to have them say such things about you. But never mind that. It’s over now.”

“ I might have known it. Trust Cameronville. What is all this about William and Dolly telling all they know? You may as well get me informed, Sally June. If you don’t, I’ll get up and go ask them myself.”

## *April and Sally June*

Master Douglas was still Master Douglas in spite of the lobster.

Sally June hastened to tell all she knew herself of what had happened since six o'clock that morning. And an amazing tale it made, all round.

When she reached the part concerning William's decision, Douglas exploded.

“What nonsense! He'll jolly well keep his mouth shut. What do they suppose I care what they say about me? It has never mattered. I am glad, of course, that you know. I see now I should have told you myself. My mistake and I'm confoundedly sorry I didn't. But the thing had quieted down so, I had no idea it would blaze up. It wouldn't have, not to make any difference, if Mary hadn't pranced down here. It was the deuce of a combination what with the lobster and all. I am glad Bill and Dolly have patched it up. Glad too that the old boy came out so pat. He's got good stuff in him, always did have under the palaver. And I did bully him, make him keep still against his will. He is quite

## *April and Sally June*

right about that. We had all given up too much to get him into the church to let him go and smash everything up at the start. It would have broken my mother's heart. She had been looking forward for years to his ordination."

"What about you? Didn't you count?"

"Not much. Precious little, even to myself, at that time."

"Why? Because of Dolly and — and William?"

"Precisely. Because of Dolly and William. It isn't awfully pleasant to be engaged to a girl and find she prefers your brother and the only thing you can decently do is to retire from the scene."

A little sharp dart of jealousy spurted up inside Sally June to be instantly squashed. None of that, Sally June.

"I wasn't in a frame of mind to care over much what did happen to me," he went on. "Don't look so sober, my child. I was frightfully young and green. I got over it in six months. I don't mean got over being young

## *April and Sally June*

and green. That too, of course. But being in love. Only, a burned child dreads the fire. I never let myself come anywhere near a blaze again till I met you, Lady April."

"Not even Mary Muldane? She is so beautiful. I don't see how you could help it," sighed Sally June.

"No, there's never been anything like that between us, Sally June, though I admire her immensely — now. There was a time when I was bitter enough against her. As I have been all along against William — until now. I haven't much tolerance for treachery. Never did have. And Murray Muldane was a prince among men and had been a wonderfully good friend to Bill and to me. He was much older than Mary. But when I met her again over in France and saw what she had made of herself, I felt differently. If ever a woman made up for a slip, Sally June, Mary Muldane did. Hats off to her! I am glad it's hats off to Bill too, at last. Maybe he has been paying too, all along, and I didn't know it. And maybe I did him an ill turn instead of a good one by



## *April and Sally June*

standing the gaff for him. As I told you that day, it's an awkward thing to play with souls. Don't imagine I think I'm any sort of a hero, Sally June. Maybe I was just a plain, stupid fool. Just at this minute I'm quite convinced of it."

"I like Mary Muldane's best. A glorious fool! Douglas, did you mean what you said about not caring to be — re-instated?"

"Of course, I don't care about it. What is Cameronville's little opinion worth? The rest of the world never knew anything about it. It was a *tempest* in a tea pot. That is why it has never bothered me much. It never hampered me in any way — outside of my home town," he laughed without bitterness. "It couldn't possibly make me feel better or brighter anyway to see old Bill go up in smoke and take Dolly and a whole lot of other folks with him. Now could it, Sally June, honest Injun?"

Sally June agreed that it couldn't.

"If he wants to go up in the mountains and work, more power to him, and Dolly too. I

## *April and Sally June*

say, let 'em go. But I'd a whole lot rather they went with everybody's good will and admiration than the other way. I've no fancy at all to be up in the air on the teeter, if Bill has to go down. Have you, little Lady April?"

Again Sally June admitted that she had not. Miss Serena had believed in him all along without explanation. Other people didn't matter.

"That is the way it strikes me," said Douglas. "We are not going to spend much of our lives here. We are going to be at home in New York and Paris and Rome and on the high seas. Shall we let it all slide, beg the others to do the same or shall we let loose the dogs of war? I leave it to you, little lady. I'll abide by your decision. If I was an arrogant idiot once I don't want to be again."

"If it is left to me," said Sally June, "let's leave the creatures in the kennel. Truly I'd like it better. I hate talk. There has been enough — too much."

"Good for you, Sally June. That is settled.

## *April and Sally June*

Now let's get back to ourselves. In the top, left hand bureau drawer, is a small purple leather box. In it is the ring I mentioned that I went to the city to get. Will you produce the box, please, Miss Fenton? I want to try it on my best girl's finger, to see if it fits. It is not good enough for her. Nothing could be. But it was the best we could find."

Sally June produced the box and the next minute Douglas had slipped on her engagement finger a ring so beautiful it made her gasp, a single, large perfect sapphire, set round with diamonds.

"Oh!" she cried. "Douglas, it is so beautiful! Much too beautiful for me."

"Nothing doing, liar. Nothing could be too beautiful for you. Diamonds for April and April's lady, sapphire for April sky and true blue. Kiss me, Sally June. If you don't look out I shall fall in love with you. I may — any minute."

Sally June laughed and kissed him.

"Now then when are you going to marry me? Tomorrow? Can't you let Hannah go

## *April and Sally June*

hang, Sally June? I need you a whole lot more than she does."

Sally June laughed again. She was so happy that she did not want to bother to explain just now that so far as she was concerned, Hannah had already gone hang.

"Not tomorrow," she told him, shaking her head.

When then? The day after? They could get old Bill to turn the trick. No use whatever having a minister in the family if you didn't make use of him.

Sally June still shook her head. She had to have clothes. It couldn't possibly be day after tomorrow.

Clothes? Rubbish!

Precisely. That was what most of her clothes were. That was why she had to have some new ones.

What had become of the gray dress — the one she had had on that day?

No need to ask — what day? The day of the enchanted evening, of course. But the gray dress wouldn't do. It had been torn and

## *April and Sally June*

mended. One did not wear a mended dress to be married in. Sally June's cheeks flushed happily. "To be married in!" How strange it sounded and yet, how sweet! There was a white chiffon party frock. It had never been worn, had been saved for a really great occasion. Perhaps —

Perhaps? No perhaps. Positively. The white chiffon frock by all means. And they would go right off to New York anyway, directly after, and buy millions of frocks.

"Oh!" cried Sally June, eyes ashine. "New York?"

Of course, New York. A day or so for shops, a play or two, a few trips up the river with dinner in some heavenly spot. And then, no more city. Two weeks in camp up in the Adirondacks, miles away from everybody. How about it? Would that be the kind of honeymoon Sally June would like? Woods and stars and waters and just themselves.

Would it? Sally June's answer was eminently satisfactory.

## *April and Sally June*

The day after tomorrow then?

No, the day after the day after. Would that do, Tyrant?

“It will do, Slave. But may I ask just why that particular day? Just so as not to spoil me completely by giving me my own way in everything from the start?” Douglas’s eyes were smiling. He reached out and took Sally June’s hand in his.

Sally June laughed at his query.

“Probably I should have argued it out like that but I didn’t. That is the day the doctor says Miss Serena may come down stairs again. Do you think we might be married about twilight—in the garden—and ask Pan—as well as William?”

“Of course. Why not? Pan shall be there. You’ll hear his pipes, Lady April. Oh, Sally June, I do love you. I wish I were thirty instead of forty. Do you suppose I am really going to make you happy?”

For once “Master Douglas” was very humble.

## *April and Sally June*

“ I don’t suppose,” sighed Sally June. “ I know. Hear that blue bird. I do love April, don’t you ? ”

“ Almost as much as June — Sally June, of course.”















